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**GROWTH OF NATIONALISM
IN
INDIA
(1857 — 1918).**

Vol. I

Dr. Sukhbir Choudhary



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GROWTH OF NATIONALISM IN INDIA

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PREFACE

“Ah, Choudhary! get up. Don’t you see?...Stalin criticized by the CPSUB. It is a news flashed in bold letters at the top of the front page of today’s paper”, said Mahmud-al-Huq, my room-mate, jolting me from my sweet sleep in the early hours of a fine morning in 1956.

“This is all a *bourgeois* propaganda. It is highly imperative that this kind of malacious propaganda should have no more effect on our people than water on a duck’s back. After all the capitalist press has in the past left no stone unturned to malign Stalin and the Soviet Union so many times”, replied I in my half-sleep. Throwing a disconcerting look at Mahmud I again wrapped myself in a bedcover to have a sound sleep. Looking ridiculous and small at my recalcitrant indifference he did not further press me for the conversation. But by the time I got out of my bed, he had already left for the Council’s office. When I reached Sapru House, to my amazement Stalin had already become the topic of the day among the research scholars. This time there were more brickbats than bouquets for Stalin who once bestrode Soviet Union like a colossus and whose rise from humble origin to Himalayan heights had almost hypnotized many of us. It was a hey-day for the critics of Soviet system who were magnifying every mole hill into a mountain and were suspecting every wayside bush to hide a snare. They were seeing in the Soviet Union a veritable Prometheus gnawed by the eagle of disgrace. Having a dig at the system they were snuffing at one breathe.

Truth-seekers were busy in collecting all the available information on the crisis. Dr. M.S. Venkataramani was hurrying to a bookshop to purchase all the volumes of Stalin’s *Works* before they disappeared from the market.

Although on the surface there seemed usual calm, internally I was in a great quandry. The wheels of ferocious time were plying their lonely furrow and hammering strokes after strokes on my perturbed conscience. They left me reeling. A furtive feeling of gloominess was whipping and pressing every

second into reorienting my approach towards the Soviet Union which had generated more hope for mankind than any other place on the earth. Ideas over ideas went on rankling my mind. Was I labouring under a delusion? Had I hitched my wagon to a wrong horse? This mental split was acting as a catalyst to political polarization.*

And all this happened when after independence India was beginning to count its red-letter days. We were dreaming to build up a new India on Soviet model. We had hitched our wagons to the rising red star. The indigenous politics: "He who has, to him shall be given: and from him who hath not, shall be taken away even that which he has" was disgusting us.

Many nights passed sleepless. Seeing me so much perturbed Mahmud suggested: "Why don't you visit the Soviet Union? See with your own eyes and try to locate the ulcer in the body politic of that mighty system." "But how? I am a member neither of the Congress Party nor of the Communist Party of India. Moreover, only those who are in the top hierarchy of these parties, are getting chance to go abroad. We, poor creatures of academic world! who bothers about us?" said I.

And Mahmud appeared to be nodding in favour of this assertion. We were again glooming in the dark.

But suddenly one day it looked as if manna from heaven had been delivered. There appeared an advertisement on behalf of the Ministry of Education that the Soviet Government had offered some scholarships for research on various subjects including Political Science and History in Moscow. I was thrilled, jumped on the idea and immediately applied to try my luck. But the stars were still evading me. I could not be selected. After some time again I tried to seek the help of a Soviet Embassy official, but it did not materialize.

* An assessment later on when the mind was cool, however, induced me to think that Stalin should have been criticized only for his genuine mistakes, while his contribution to the cause of socialism should be simultaneously acknowledged.

Meanwhile something quite unbelievable was happening on Indian political scene. Chester Bowles had come to India. In the beginning we looked at him with an air of studied coldness and apathy, came as he from a capitalist world—a world of highly complicated military-industrial complex, that had unwantonly intervened only a few years ago in the Korean Civil War in favour of upper classes ruling in the southern part of that country and made that country plunge into a prolonged bloody ordeal. We, therefore, thought that a scion of aristocracy had come to preach democracy to this country.

But suddenly he leaped into prominence. He won the approbrium of being a spokesman and well-wisher of the poor Indians. He had a special knack of getting round people. With all the floodlights turned upon him he even did not mind thudging on the cobbled roads. In the course of inaugurating the Community Development Projects when he volunteered himself for village road-building and moved with a *tasla* of earth in his hands, or gave a helping hand to the poor fishermen to pull in a net, it looked as if he was acting like a blue-blooded Gandhi. Coming out of his ivory tower he became a man of the masses and for the masses. Many noticed the metamorphosis. To us he became the symbol of humanism full of great energy and determination. No other foreign ambassador could match him in the kind of wide popularity that he enjoyed.

The Sapru House Council often used to invite him even when he was not an American plenipotentiary and was on a visit to India. His was the most powerful intellect, the finest, the subtlest, the most attractive and the most effective. It was not dry or hard, nor lacked colour and emotion. It had weight, force and power. The words of his orderly oration marched into action like trained units. Every sentence had its mark felt on the audience. It was really something to enjoy an intellectual feast, plenty and bountiful. In him there had always been a streak of the showmanship that could impress and dazzle us.

The old coldness and apathy displayed towards him in the beginning as a plenipotentiary of a capitalist power was fast disappearing. Although ideologically we were still poles apart

yet he attracted us as he had something substantial of a Lincoln, Franklin and our own Gandhi in him.

When these developments were leaving their imprint of hope and despair on my mind, Dr. Ramani one day suddenly called me and repeated, "See the world all around before you take a decision and mould your mind. You can also find something substantially good in the West." Although I had earlier taken his advice quite lightly, sure as I was about the soundness of the Soviet system, but I could not ignore it this time. I nodded my head in favour of his suggestion. Seeing me amicable he suggested me to join the American Studies Department of the School. I welcomed the idea, agreed to apply for admission. I was not so much keen about my degree, as on visiting the United States. Moreover, it were the students of American Studies who alone had the privilege of a field trip. There were substantial grants available from Rockefeller and Ford Foundations. Other departments were not yet so lucky.

Meanwhile Dr. Ramani had left for field studies in the United States. In his place had come an American Professor to guide our destinies.

First thing I could see about him was not Phillips Bradley, but the protruding part of his nether region—the stomach. For it bulged out defiant of the world and ran before him, as it were, to display its circumvient rotundity, not dissimilar to the special apparatus in a class room to explain to the school children the size and shape of mother earth. Over this circumference Professor Bradley had tied his leather-belt. And it marked faithfully the equatorial line on the earth's surface. His grotesque physique was revolting and repulsive. Although his knowledge of American history rarely impressed us, but he used to arrive in the classroom feeling like a civilized Gulliver on a journey to the land of backward, unintelligent Lilliputians. His arrogance was in sharp contrast to the humility of Professor Quincy Wright—the giant among intellectuals—to learn from whom was really a privilege. Outwardly Bradley was so sophisticated, polite, coveted and honey-tongued that you could rarely mark the hidden venom inside his heart. He

claimed to be our friend. But he belonged to the category of Li Lin-Fu of the T'ang dynasty. Lin-Fu was a man with "honey on his lips but murder in his heart." His utterances were cannons concealed in flowers. All imperialists are the people falling in this category. So Mr. Bradley was a modern Li Lin-Fu. Mentally he was so "patriotic-minded" an American that he could hardly bear even a reasonable criticism of the United States. No sooner a speaker started making a critical appraisal of American foreign or economic policy, he walked immediately out of the meeting. But when he talked on American democracy, we saw a new man in him, the democrat replacing the demagogue. Others, however, insisted that the zebra could not change his strips. More than that Bradley's rabid anti-Communism knew no bounds. Actually it was a phobia wrapped inside an enigma without keys. Once when we were on a rural trip, he marked some object on the wayside from the fast-moving car and exclaimed loudly: "Ah! see Communism there!" "Where Sir?" said I. "See there", said he pointing towards a religious Hindu flag flying over a sacred grave of a saint. On my explaining he did not care but said: "See the sickle and hammer" pointing towards the word "OM" written a little bit artistically on the flag. My further explaining of the word did not appear to carry any conviction with him and up to the last he perhaps went on believing that the particular locality was highly infected with Communists. "They are a danger. Why don't you", he went on indulging in his hysterical outbursts, "weed them out?"

Yet there was another side of our fictitious pedagogue. And I could never dream to perceive it. He was intriguing, mysterious and enigmatic and alleged to be associated with the CIA. Secretly he had planted his agents in Sapru House to watch over the activities of the students in American Department in particular and others in general. All these plans of his were couched in mystery and remained a subject of conjecture.

Unmindful of these astonishing inhibitions of the professor I went on keeping myself busy with the Department studies. So keen was I to mastermind and to know about America that I rarely left an American movie that I did not see. Rarely there was a magazine that I did not study. Rarely there was a

function related to American life that I did not attend. I was keen to learn as much as possible about America before actually landing there. This little humble background of study, I thought, would help me in understanding the American people and society. I was also keen to see the American Democracy in action. This experience would help, I hoped, in synthesizing Soviet and American Experiments for the benefit of our country which was still below the "take off" stage. This kind of search for nation-building should tremendously help our own people to build a magnificent, dynamic edifice based on socialism guided by indigenous conditions, something like the socialist revolution ushered in the Republic of Chile under the leadership of Marxist President Allende or what has recently been reflected in the victory of Willy Brandt in West Germany. I was crazy to sit at the feet of intellectual giants like Frederick L. Schuman whose writings on Soviet system and International Politics had fascinated me so much that I read them like novels. I was keen to learn from Professor Morgenthau whose *Politics Among Nations* had tremendously helped me to have a deeper insight of the theories of nation-building. The renowned political thinker and journalist, Walter Lippman, appealed me considerably. My study of his writings had whetted my appetite for knowledge. I was equally keen to pay my homage to Abraham Lincoln and Franklin D Roosevelt who had done a lot to anchorate the exploited and weaker sections of the American society.

While I was thus carelessly but confidently wandering in this dreamland, the axe fell on me and another student of the Department. Bradley's agents had secretly reported against us as being anti-American. One of them was certainly most notorious. From behind his spectacles he looked like a *bagula bhakta* but jumped on his prey like a *baiz*, and he was also the first to shed crocodile tears after the harm was done. Very soon his coffers were filled for such "worthy services". From a man on the street he became a man of the mansion with car on the left and car on the right.

To blow the hell out of us, Bradley, without entertaining a speck of sentimentalism and hypocrisy, acted unceremoniously. With merciless pungency his sword-like pen expunged

our despised names from the list of scholars to be sent for field trip to the United States. His action was like piercing red-hot iron into a heart already lacerated with grief. I was visibly taken aback by this crack down. There was a sense of shock and bewilderment at the nasty behaviour of an "Ugly American". Two years were simply wasted on the report of waxdolls of American neo-colonialism. There went on perpetually ringing for some days in my mind the following few lines of the poem *Torn Night* written by one of our top-most film actresses:

Broken bits of day, torn rays of night
doled out day and night.
Ears tuned to deeps of the heart
hear only a laughter
ringing with one more defeat.
Wounds, defeats, turmoil
constant companions of my heart.

My friends came to console me. But I replied by quoting the following famous verse of an Urdu poet:

राम आई ना साहिल की आसूदगी,
मैंने धबराके तूफ़ां को अपना लिया ।
मेरी किस्ती को अब सहारा न दो,
हो सका तो खुद ही सम्भल जायेगी ॥

When every hope of going abroad was blighted and shattered, I could no longer afford to delude myself in any kind of resignation. Although the desolation that took hold of me was surely much harder to tolerate than I could bear, I was certainly keen to come out of the whirlpool of uncertainty and standstill fiasco. I, therefore, tried to see recourse in studying and working on our own national liberation movement. More I studied its various profiles, more I was enchanted and fascinated. Although the blunders committed many a time by political leaders certainly shocked me, yet they induced me to make a critical appraisal of the events. From a rattle-tyattle beginning came the ideas and ideologies that moved my imagination and heart to an equal degree. And I felt electrified enormously.

Although the phase of modernization was introduced partly by the Bengal Intellectuals led by great Raja Ram Mohan Roy in the beginning of nineteenth century, yet its influence remained confined to the few. On the other hand, the mighty upsurge of 1857, although fought with feudal techniques, generated such a tremendous national consciousness that it became a source of great inspiration to all the latter political movements. Its very unsuccess made the coming generations to ponder seriously and adopt the latest available techniques of national liberation. I, therefore, begin my first volume from 1857 and propose to complete my study of the subject of nationalism in four volumes by making it up-to-date when nationalism is gradually but inevitably replaced by socialism, a more dynamic phenomenon of human emancipation from the clutches of exploitation.

A necessary prerequisite of writing about a movement for a scholar is not to mix up romance, emotionalism and history. He should know how to keep them apart in order to hand down an unprejudiced judgement to mankind. Running them together is apt to lead to confusion. Napoleon Bonaparte was perhaps correct in pointing out to renowned German poet-historian Wieland, "A historian should take men and nations as they are, should appraise them as their time and their circumstances have made them." Unfortunately, the histories of nationalism written so far have to a great extent been those of glorification of the upper classes only, written by the *bourgeois* or *petty-bourgeois* historians about the contribution of the upper classes. They concealed a life below the surface, a set of emotional approaches that are associated with socio-economic conditions. They largely ignored for the readers the real evaluation of the tremendous historical significance of the class cleavage existing between the various strata of indigenous society that determined their contribution in various degrees. The lower classes that also rose in revolt against British Imperialism, had their own specific contribution to make. Their political consciousness might not have been as much advanced as that of the upper classes, nevertheless it cannot be denied that they had become conscious at least of this fact that without their collaboration and participation the upper classes would not succeed in bringing a bourgeois-democratic revolution in India. Like the upper classes they too were born from

man's universal will to revolt. No one can doubt that there lives in human brain a deep-entrenched desire to struggle against anything that one feels to be unjust or oppressive. The author's purpose in these volumes has been to discuss, chapter by chapter, all the forces that in one way or another can give mastery, broadly speaking, over this human endeavour to liberate Indian society. I have not tried to detail the history of the various political forces in this discussion. I have only wanted to interpret them on the basis of their actions and interactions to illustrate the effects of these forces on the all-round developments in the country. I have tried to refer also to those forces which had arisen in consequence of historical development.

I will be failing in my duty if I do not express my gratitude to my guide, Dr. Tara Chand, an eminent historian of India.

I am deeply indebted to my friends—Kashi Ram Sharma, B.S. Pavadya, Verma, S.C. Gogia, Jogendra Chopra, D. Sen, D.A. George, R.C. Pradhan, B.M. Kaushik, A.P. Jain—for helping me to complete the first two volumes. I also must express my thanks to the library staff, especially Mr. Ansari, Mrs. Andrade, Mrs. Krishna Sen and Miss Nilam Mathur, Mrs. R.K. Grover, Hari Om and Halim Khwaja of the I.C.W.A. and S.I.S. for making the needy references readily available.

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Sukhbir Choudhary

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GROWTH OF NATIONAL CONSCIOUSNESS

Without country you have neither name, token, voice, nor rights, no admission as brothers into the fellowship of the peoples. You are the bastards of Humanity. Soldiers without a banner, Israelites among the nations, you will find neither faith nor protection; none will be sureties for you... O My Brother! love your country... Your country should be your Temple God at the summit, a People of Equals at the base.

[Mazzini, 'Duties of Man and other Essays, English Translation (Everyman's Library) Essay V, 53-4 & 57.]

The Concept of Nationalism

Nationalism is a phenomenon of the modern age. Its first manifestation culminated in the French Revolution and does not go beyond the period following the second half of the eighteenth century. "Nationalism is a child", observes G.P. Gooch, "of the French Revolution."¹ It was from here that nationalism began to play a significant role in the evolution of mankind. However, it would be wrong to presume that the French Revolution marked its birth. Like all important movements occurring in world history its roots went deeper into the past. The factors which led to its emergence had taken centuries in maturing before they converged and became, together, a creative force. That is why, due to the uneven growth of human civilization, nationalism is not the same in all lands and at all phases. It is a historical phenomenon, and therefore determined by the

1. G.P. Gooch, *Studies in Modern History* (London, 1931), p. 217.

political thoughts and social structures of the various countries where it starts growing. Only a knowledge of the historical development of nationalism and a comparative study of its various shapes can help us in understanding the influence of nationalism. It is undeniable that objective forces are of great significance in shaping the nationalities, yet it should also not be overlooked that the most necessary element, in the words of Hans Kohn (who is an indisputable authority on the subject), is a "living and active corporate will". "It is this will which we call nationalism... It asserts that the nation state is the ideal and the only legitimate form of political organization"²

Nationalism not only marked a break with the feudal past but also represented not a particular class and its interests but the entire people residing under a political unity established with their support and goodwill, and not imposed from above by an absolute monarchy or dictatorship. Hans Kohn points out:

Nationalism is inconceivable without the ideas of popular sovereignty preceding — without a complete revision of ruler and ruled, of classes and castes. The aspect of the universe had to be secularized with the help of a new natural science and of natural law.... The traditionalism of economic life had to be broken by the rise of the third estate, which was to turn the attention away from the royal courts and their civilization to the life, language and arts of the people .. The growth of nationalism is the process of integration of the masses of the people into a common political form. Nationalism therefore presupposes the existence, in fact or as an ideal, of a centralized form of government over a large and distinct territory... Nationalism is not a natural phenomenon, not a product of 'eternal' or 'natural' laws; it is a product of the growth of social and intellectual factors at a certain stage of history... Nationalism is first and foremost a state of mind, an act of consciousness.³

2. Hans Kohn, *Nationalism: Its meaning and History* (Princeton, D. Van Nostr and Co., 1955), p. 10.

3. Hans Kohn, *The Idea of Nationalism* (New York, 1951) pp. 3-4.

The rise of nationalism everywhere thus implied an activization of the people and the demand for a new ordering of society. In course of time it became the determining political and cultural force among all the races in the world. It continued to command respectability so long as it did not embark on the phase of aggression, particularly territorial aggression, when it assumed an imperialist or fascist character.

Nationalism in India

The rise of nationalism in India too is a phenomenon of the modern age. It denotes the growth of the conscience of political and social awakening and will. Despite being a geographical entity since times immemorial India lacked the ingredients of political homogeneity, except on some specific occasions, throughout her long and chequered history. But even this political unity was imposed from above.

In consequence India could not achieve a permanent political unification because the imperial unity was determined almost entirely by the personality and power of the monarch. The entire edifice toppled as soon as the line of these supermen ended.

Even under these monarchs, a unity in diversity became the rule. Innumerable states constituted the mosaic of the empire, and they enjoyed the full rights of autonomy. The king was satisfied by exercising only the rights of a suzerain over these petty principalities, who offered allegiance to him, subordinated their external policies to his diplomatic activities, and paid him taxes, but which continued to preserve their sovereignty in other fields. Whenever the centralizing authority of the emperor fell in disruption, these subordinate principalities lost no time in proclaiming their full-fledged sovereignty with no super power to subdue them. The downfall of the central kingship paved the way for political disunification in which everyone claimed supremacy. Perpetual skirmishing and mutual jealousies caused the entire peninsula to fritter away its combined strength and so become easy victim to any organised attack from without.

Neither the Hindu emperors nor the Sultans and Moghuls could do away with this system of subordinate principalities

exercising local sovereignty. This great lacuna in Indian politics went on undermining the power of the ingredients of political unity in India, despite the fact that more than once it had become a *fait accompli* under the aegis of the powerful monarchs.

But the greatest weakness of this political homogeneity lay in the fact that it was never backed by the people's will. It was an imposition from above, seldom taking into account the interests and wishes of the indigenous people. There never took place a real administrative unification of the country because the agents and officials of the king, posted in various parts of the state, did not generally display any special concern with the daily routine of the people. They were merely interested in collecting land revenue from the self-governing village, levying troops and securing tributes and taxes in the urban areas. They never ruled within the village or the city.

On the other hand, the village republic, tied by various caste and village committees, constituted the *de facto* political administration of the rural population. These committees looked after the cultivation and distribution of land by the farmer's families, regulated relations among the indigenous members, who were mainly of handicraftsmen and farmers. These committees also looked after matters like education, sanitation and settlement of criminal and civil disputes. Thus, because of the economic and social set-up, rural people were equally apathetic towards the ruler. Their apathy is manifested by the following epitaph:

कौऊ नृप होवे, हमें का हानि ।

(Whosoever may be the king, we are not going to suffer.)

Therefore, in the absence of permanent political unity India continued to exist as a fragmented phenomenon like Italy before its political unification at the end of the nineteenth century. "Hindustan is an Italy of Asiatic dimensions..." wrote Marx in the *New York Daily Tribune* on 25 June, 1853, "the same rich variety in the products of the soil, and the same dismemberment in the political configuration. Just as Italy has, from time to time, been compressed by the conqueror's sword into different national masses, so do we find Hindustan, when not under the pressure of the Mohammedan, or the Moghul, or the Briton,

dissolved into as many independent and conflicting states as it numbered towns, or even villages.”⁴

It was with the advent of British rule in India that political unity in India became a reality. It was the inevitable outcome of the introduction of a uniform currency system operating in all the social and economic groups, the operation of a new judicial system drawing inspiration from the democratic conception of the equality of all citizens before the law and a centralized political administration which continued to control the entire peninsula right from the Himalayas in the north down to Cape Comorin in the south. The well-spread administrative machinery of this new state penetrated even the remotest village.⁵

But the mere emergence of this political unity did not lead to the growth of nationalism. Political unity was still imposed from above by an alien power. It was not the natural outcome of the people's will—and political consciousness.

4. Mulk Raj Anand, ed., *Marx and Engels on India*, a collection of articles and writings (Allahabad, 1933), pp. 14-15.

5. It will be appropriate to remember that the administrative unification of the entire peninsula was accomplished by the British regime which founded hierarchically graded public services all over the country. These imperial, provincial and subordinate services were christened the executive branch of the centralized state. This centralized system of political administration brought about, for the first time, a real political administrative unity.

The establishment of the administrative unification of the country was followed by the establishment of a uniform currency system which linked very closely the indigenous market with the world market. This uniform currency system operated and governed all the complicated and multifold transactions between the peasant and the feudal lord, employees and employers, businessmen and bankers,

Though the British regime established this centralized system for its own political and economic ends, yet it was also good for the Indian people among whom it awakened national consciousness. It led to the creation of a feeling in the minds of the people that they were the “children of the same soil”. It will not be out of context to say here that with the exception of Muslim League the entire nationalist movement stood for the retention of this political and administrative unity of India.

The British regime also promulgated a uniform legal system in India. It enacted laws and held the powers of codifying them. This new legal system was applicable to every inhabitant without distinction of caste and creed. To enforce legal system the alien regime

However, Indian nationalism came into existence during the rule of the alien British regime as a result of the action and interaction of innumerable subjective and objective forces which developed in the indigenous social set-up. They were the result of alien rule and the influence of the powerful forces acting in the international field. The rise of nationalism in India was a many-sided phenomenon because it emerged out of these conditions.

Unification of National Economy

The growth of the national consciousness in India is closely linked with the development of a unified national economy. This unification emerged out of the destruction of the ancient and medieval pre-capitalist techniques of

established a hierarchically graded judiciary with the Privy Council at the top to the lower courts at the district and tehsil levels. The Judicial officials were appointed by the central and provincial governments to interpret and enforce the new laws incorporated in its various codes. Thus by establishing a centralized judiciary the British superseded the customary law prevailing in the country before their advent and expropriated the rural and caste committees of their political and judicial powers.

With the exception of the discrimination displayed towards Europeans and Anglo-Indians the judicial system was on the whole equalitarian in character — in deep contrast to the customary law prevailing in the pre-British phase, where judgments were biased due to the discrimination shown between one caste and another and one community and another as a result of its being governed by the religious code. The new judicial system drew inspiration from the democratic conception of equality of all citizens before the law. Appraising the system of British law and administration prevailing all over the Indian peninsula, Bipinchandra Pal pointed out:

The Penal Code and the Criminal Procedure Code have set up a standard of personal freedom that was unknown, truth to say, both to Hindu and Muslim criminal law and administration. The Criminal Procedure Code secured special privileges for European British-born subjects in India. But so far as the natives of the country are concerned, it has no room for any differential treatment as between one man and another. In the eye of the British law, the zamindar and the ryot, the Brahmin and the Pariah, the prince and the peasant are equal.... The stupendous mass upheaval which we see about us today could never have happened but for the levelling down process of the British law and administration, which paid no regard to distinctions of caste or rank or wealth among the people.

Writings and Speeches (Calcutta, Yugantri, 1958), Vol. I, p. 185.]

production and their replacement by modern capitalist economic techniques. Despite many political revolutions, communal upheavals and disastrous battles, dynastic changes and the rise and fall of kingdoms, the self-sufficient village economy had survived without any significant change in its internal structure in the pre-British phase. It had remained almost free from foreign intervention.

This isolated rural economy could not evolve any national consciousness in the people because "the growth of this consciousness pre-supposes, as its material reason and pre-requisite, unified and common political and economic life. Such an economic life comes into being only when productive forces have reached a high level of development, division of labour has become universal and all-embracing and, as a result, there is an all round economic exchange. In the epoch of the autarchic village, common economic life did not exist among the people as a whole, and hence there could not emerge any consciousness of a common economic existence on an all India level." ⁶

However, it does not mean that during this long period there occurred no changes in or around the anatomy of rural life. But whatever transformations did take place they were of a quantitative, not qualitative character. They did not and could not create national consciousness.

A transformation in the rural anatomy did take place in the nineteenth century and it was of major significance. This change was the indirect product of the conquest of India by the British, who adopted certain political and economic policies with the motive of serving only their own interests.

But whatever might have been the motives of the British regime one fact is indisputable; that the transformation was introduced in Indian life by a capitalist nation which had already crossed the phase of feudal disunity and integrated itself into a modern nation socially, politically, economically and culturally stronger than its previous phase. It had generated a high sense of patriotism and nationalism, mutual feelings of co-operation as well as a highly developed

6. A.R. Desai, *Social Background of Indian Nationalism* (Bombay, 2nd edition, 1954), pp. 12-13.

capacity for organization due to its newly established socio-economic structure.

To serve her own economic interests it was impossible for the British regime to use dependent India without introducing radical changes in the feudal anatomy of the indigenous set-up. However, imperfect or distorted these changes might have been, they did lead to the progressive change of the ancient feudal Indian economy. It was so more particularly after 1857, when British victory after an Indian revolt paved the way for the complete destruction of the old ruling class. This change led not only to the disappearance of land relations and artisan and handicraft industries and the extinction of the old classes associated with the old economic set-up, but also gave rise to a new phenomenon. There came into being new classes—capitalists, intellectuals, industrial and transport workers, agricultural labourers, tenants and so on. They were the by-products of the European business enterprise in India and the establishment of British administration and introduction of western education. There was also organized a new kind of merchant trading in the modern indigenous and external products. The importance of this change can be gauged by an observation made by Karl Marx in an article on India contributed to *The New York Daily Tribune* dated 25 June, 1853:

All the civil wars, invasions, revolutions, conquests, famines, strangely complex, rapid and destructive as the successive action in Hindustan may appear, did not go deeper than its surface. England has broken down the entire framework of the Indian society... English interference having placed the spinner in Lancashire and the weaver in Bengal, or sweeping away both Hindu spinner and weaver, dissolved those small semi-barbarian, semi-civilised communities, by blowing up their economical basis and thus produced the greatest, and to speak the truth, the only social revolution ever heard of in Asia.⁷

Iqbal Singh, the renowned journalist, gives the following picturesque account of this new economic transformation:

Perhaps much more than a city than any which India

7. Anand, n. 4, pp. 16, 20 & 22.

had known in the days of her classical greatness; than Asoka's Patliputra, or Harsha's Kanauj, or Delhi of the Great Moghuls over which dynastic twilight was fast closing in like a pall... Calcutta was moving towards its blaze of noon. Certainly it was a new kind of city, built with bricks and mortar like those of old, but held together by a more exquisite and impersonal nexus — the cash nexus. For it was in Calcutta much more than in Bombay that capitalist economy was beginning to take firm roots, was beginning to soften the foundations of a society seemingly fixed for all times in hierarchical moulds. In a more than metaphorical sense, it could claim to represent the transitional anatomy of the old India pregnant with the new — with the Hon'ble Company unwittingly, nonetheless too tenderly, but effectively performing the functions of a midwife.⁸

Besides Calcutta other important places where the new social classes were springing up were the cities of Bombay, Madras and towns which in course of time became the subsidiary centres of British commercial enterprise and administration. The Presidency towns were in every manner new. They were not only places of commerce and industry, they had municipalities on the western model which governed the activity of their citizens and provided for daily, basic requirements. The Indian dwellers came under the occupation and education. The Indian middle class of the urban centres was clearly distinguishable from the rural masses in standards of belief and conduct.⁹ It has, however, to be admitted that this process of reshuffling of Indians into new social groupings was an uneven one due to the uneven growth of the political hegemony of the British in India.

All the newly growing various classes developed certain distinctive characteristics, but the most prominent of them was their national character. By being the integrated components of a single system, most of them built up their own

8. Iqbal Singh, *Ram Mohan Roy* (Bombay, 1958), p. 118.

9. For further study see Dr Tara Chand, *History of the Freedom Movement in India* (Government of India Publications Division, 1967), Vol. II, pp. 108-69.

organizations specifying their economic and political interests on an all-India level. As soon as the various individuals and groups comprising a particular class became aware of the basic identity of interests (despite the fact that they might be competing among themselves within the structure of their basic identification or community of interests) they began to feel very strongly an urgency to build up their own various organizations on an all-India level and organize movements—both violent and non-violent—to safeguard and enhance their specific common interests on the national level. For instance, Indian businessmen began to manifest their identity as national businessmen and founded their own chambers of commerce and federations of industries. Similarly, the working class manifested its personality as a national proletariat and formed, with the passage of time, its own organization, namely, the All-India Trade Union Congress on an all-India level.

Another distinctive characteristic of these rising classes was that besides having their own national organizations on an all-India level in order to achieve their own specific objectives (sometimes uniting and on other occasions fighting among themselves as the emergencies of their specific interests demanded) they, simultaneously, became aware of certain interests common with the Indian people as a whole. For instance, they began to recognize the necessity of developing the new productive forces, and the economic advancement of the nation as a whole, of their increased participation in the day-to-day administrative functions of the government, till then fully monopolized by the Anglo-Indian bureaucracy; and also of the popularization of the modern system of education in order to learn the secrets of the progress attained by West European countries in political, economic and other spheres of life. Not only did the intelligentsia become conscious of the fact that the advancement of a particular class was also closely associated with the general progress of the country, these social classes also saw the necessity of uniting with the forces struggling on an all-India level for the common interests of their nation. They realized that rapid development of industry and reorganization of agriculture in order to achieve prosperity would serve not only the interests of a specific class but that of everyone; and that the popularization of modern

education on a mass scale would benefit not only the professional classes but would also be a great leap forward in the social and economic transformation of the entire society. Similarly, the working classes began to feel strongly that the transfer of political power into the hands of Indians while benefiting the bourgeoisie, would certainly pave the way for their final struggle for liberation. All these considerations assisted in the process of forming a united nationalist movement of all the progressive classes (except, of course, the zamindars, who, with certain exceptions, displayed an attitude of antagonism and apathy towards the nationalist movement which aimed at the democratic reorganization of society, instead the zamindars looked towards the alien regime for safeguarding their privileges and powers) with a common aim reflecting the demands of radical administrative change, an executive responsible to legislature, full-fledged civil liberties, etc.

Changes in the Rural Economy

The British conquest of the Indian peninsula introduced revolutionary changes in the then prevailing land system. The new revenue system led to the extinction of the traditional right of the village community over the village land. In its place it introduced two forms of property in land: feudalism in certain parts of India and individual peasant proprietorship in others. The first form was introduced by Lord Cornwallis by promulgating the Permanent Land Settlement Law for three provinces, viz., Bengal, Bihar and Orissa, in 1793. According to the conditions laid down in the law the new landlords had to deposit a fixed amount in the treasury of the East India Company. One of the results of the system was that the old objective of village agriculture, i.e., production for village use, was replaced by that for the wider market. The scale of production was now determined by the object of sale. Thus, a cultivator produced mainly for the market to realize the maximum return in order to pay the revenue due to the government treasury. The result was the growth of commercialization and specialization of Indian agriculture.

If we analyse this development from the angle of the growth of a single national or world economy, it was certainly a progressive step. It played a significant role in welding together the economy of India for the consolidation of the

country. Secondly, now the peasant began to buy manufactured cloth and other such goods instead of producing them himself. Thus the village gradually was transformed from a self-governing community into an administrative unit of the centralized political administration and an integral though dependent unit of the national economy.

Thus started the conception of a united nation out of a people who had led a life separated from each other in various hermetically sealed rural centres—physically bifurcated and having very little social and economic exchange. The commercial unification of the Indian peninsula led to the growth of higher forms of economy and social collaboration. Now collaboration was sought not on the old narrow scale, but on the national scale. “It became the material premise for the emergence of the Indian nation out of the amorphous mass of Indian people which before the unification, were scattered in numerous villages between which there was very little exchange, social or economic, and, hence, which had hardly any positive common interests.”¹⁰

Similarly came the extinction of the handicrafts trade, and the capture of their market by the cheap goods produced both by the indigenous and the foreign industries led to the transformation of India into an industrial market for these goods. The effect did not remain confined to the urban centres only. It spread from town to village, from one village to another and from India to the outside world. Finally, India's commercial unification was born. It welded the entire people into exchange relations. It laid down the foundation of a material base for the development of a common and joint economic existence, for the economic merger of Indians into a single nation.

Simultaneously a large number of handicraftsmen and artisans, uprooted now, entered the industries or agriculture as hired labour. The disintegration of this class led to an increase of the modern proletariat of tenants and land labourers. Gradually, all these classes became an integral part of the new socio-economic structure of Indian society,

and there developed a community of interests and common problems hitherto not existing among the old artisans.

The inevitable consequence of the transformation of the old static feudal economy of India into a capitalist economy was to be the establishment of modern industries. This led to the further consolidation of the national economy on an all-India level.

Transport and Communications

Another factor which played a very significant role in consolidating the people of India into a modern nation was the emergence of modern means of transport and communication, such as the railways, the roadways, the steamships and telegraph.

Accidentally the invention of modern means of transport and communication coincided with the emergence of nationalism in the nineteenth century. In spite of their embarking on the career of nations in the eighteenth century, England and France could develop themselves as full-fledged nations in the social and cultural sense only during the nineteenth century. Modern means of transport and communication assisted them to a great extent in this process.

In its pre-British phase of economic and social development India possessed a very weak and disintegrated system of transport due to its scientific and technical backwardness. Due to the virtual monopolization of the horse for military purposes (unlike Europe where the horse was largely used by the general public for its convenience) the bullock supplied the fastest means of transport for ordinary purposes in India. While the horse may manage to cover on the average six miles in an hour the bullock will be regarded fast if it made two miles in an hour. With such respectable means of transport people in the smaller countries of Europe could travel thrice as fast as the people of India, with an enormously larger territory.¹¹ Modern industries, which alone are capable of developing modern means of transport, were conspicuous by their absence. The rural side, where lived the overwhelming number of people, was autarchic in its

11. Tara Chand, *Society and State in the Mughal Period* (New Delhi, the Publications Division, Government of India, 1961), p. 39.

structure. The existence of a weak economy perpetuated the feeble system of transport. This feeble transport perpetuated the village isolation.

In the absence of efficient, modern means of transport and communication, the overwhelming number of the people living in the static anatomy of rural structure rarely thought of travelling to long distances and thereby developing the desires and efforts indispensable to social progress. So, social exchange among the inhabitants was very limited. There could, thus, develop only a local village or caste consciousness which is anathema to the rise of national consciousness.

It was only with the establishment of the East India Company's rule that modern means of transport and communication appeared in India. However, it should not be understood that the alien regime was motivated by philanthropic motives in introducing them. They were not so interested in the welfare of the people as their own economic interests. It was the pressure of British industrialists, who wanted to import cheap raw materials and export manufactured goods; who needed an outlet for their accumulated surplus capital whose investment in Britain was considered unprofitable that led to the development of modern means of transport and communication, especially railways. Besides, the politico-administrative and military-strategic reasons of the British Government itself, demanding penetration even to the remotest rural area to maintain the efficiency of the colossal administrative apparatus and to fulfil the necessity of bringing all the rural and urban centres, all the districts and provinces together under a monolithic political-administrative hegemony; and the military apparatus established in order to defend India from internal revolt as well as external attack by swift mobilization and transfer of troops to the key strategic points, prompted the alien regime to establish and spread railways,¹² to build *pucca* roads and to found the postal and

12. It is interesting to remember that the construction of railways in India was entrusted to private companies incorporated in England under contracts which, besides other concessions, carried a government guarantee of a 5 per cent return on capital. In 1848-49 the guaranteed capital amounted to Rs. 9 lakhs only; it rose to Rs. 1.3 crores in 1851-52, and Rs. 34.96 crores in 1860-61. It may also be

telegraph system. The development of such a situation lent a colonial character to the Indian transport system.

Whatever might have been the motives of the alien regime in constructing the transport and communication systems, objectively studied they were a blessing to the people. Therefore, it was a progressive development.

By assisting the new economic forces already engaged in overhauling the economic basis of the old society, and in the process of penetrating the entire country by the new industrial products, the railways played a very significant role in welding the entire peninsula into a single economic component and linking it with the world market. Karl Marx wrote :

I know that the English millocracy intend to endow India with railways with the exclusive view of extracting at diminished expense the cotton and other raw materials for their manufacturers. But when you have once introduced machinery into the locomotion of a country, which possesses iron and coal, you are unable to withhold it from its fabrication. You cannot maintain a net of railways over an immense country without introducing all those industrial processes necessary to meet the immediate and current wants of railway locomotion, and out of which there must grow the application of machinery to those branches of industry not immediately connected with railways. The railway system will therefore become in India, truly the fore-runner of modern industry.¹³

With the development of modern industries there emerged the class of the national industrialists who, due to their inevitable conflict with alien businessmen, linked themselves progressively with the national forces demanding the speedy industrialisation of the country.

pointed out that in 1853-54, there were only 21 miles of railway line open to the traffic. This increased to 839 miles in 1860-61 and 4,265 in 1869-70. By the end of the century, there were 23,763 miles of railway lines open to traffic. [Tara Chand, n. 9, p. 116]

13. Anand, n. 4, p. 62.

As a result of the development of the modern means of transport the people were also brought socially closer. The distances dividing them had been narrowed down. Motor buses brought the isolated villages into contact with the outer world. The railways and the buses also helped immigration from one place to another. The people travelled distances in order to get employment or to improve their future prospects. Thus the people became conscious of their national responsibilities. The intermixture of people of various provinces, castes and creeds not only undermined the old local and provincial narrow outlooks but also paved the way for national consciousness and co-operation to grow on the national level.

The significance of the new transport system introduced by the alien regime in bringing about new thinking, can also be gauged from the following excerpt :

The ships that sailed up the Hooghly to unload their heavy cargoes, carried other commodities besides the manufactures of Europe. They brought with them news of wars of independence and revolutions. And not only news, but the news behind the news—the revolutionary ideas generated by the great social and intellectual ferment of the 18th century in Europe which has been instrumental in overthrowing powerful monarchies and empires. These were already finding eager customers in sub-tropical latitudes... The works of citizen Paine, for instance, were to be sold at the book stalls at a premium.¹⁴

Education

Still another factor which did much in awaking national consciousness was the imparting of western education in the Indian institutions of education. In spite of the many vices which crept into the Indian social set-up due to its introduction, modern education undoubtedly played a progressive role in India. Unlike the former educational systems it was secular in character, liberal in content, and open to all, no matter what caste or religion or philosophical creed. More important, this education served as an instrument in disclosing the secrets of modern western rationalism and

14. Iqbal Singh, n. 8, p. 118.

democratic ideas to Indians. It infused inspiration for the struggle of national liberation. It brought the class of Indian intelligentsia in contact with the ideologies and philosophies preached by Milton, Shelley, Byron and a number of other enlightened poets and political philosophers like Mill, Rousseau and freedom fighters like Mazzini and Garibaldi. The introduction of modern education gave access to modern English literature, one of the richest in the world. Through the study of this literature, the intelligentsia learnt with great interest how the British themselves brought to an end the feudal medievalism, and how they laid down the foundation of modern democratic, scientific and rationalist culture; how they achieved victory over the absolutism of the medieval monarchs based on the doctrine of the Divine Rights of kings and established the theory of the sovereignty of the people, political democracy and individual liberty. The legacy of the impact of this modern education imparted by the alien regime can be witnessed by the following observation made by Surendra Nath Banerjea :

It is England which has created in us those political aspirations, the fruition of which now we claim. Our minds are steeped in the literature of the West—our souls have been stirred by the great models of public virtue which pages of English history so freely present. Where shall we find the like of them, their sobriety, their moderation, their lofty enthusiasm for the public good, their scrupulous regard for constitutional principles, even amid the fervour and heat of revolutionary agitation, place them in the front-rank of political leaders for all times and all countries... The English language has been the means of uniting the varied races and religions, the peoples and complexities of our multiform civilization in the golden chains of indissoluble union. It is our...common means of communication, north, south, east and west... Under the influence of English language and English literature...in India the dry bones of the valley have become instinct with life... A new spirit is visible in the land... English literature have communicated the Promethean spark which has galvanised us into a new life.¹⁵

15. *Speeches and Writings of Hon. Surendra Nath Banerjea* (Madras, G.A. Natesan & Co., 1920), pp. 93-5, 337-38.

Equally worth quoting is the following observation made by the eminent scholar of nationalism, Hans Kohn, on the influence of Western education on the minds of the founders and the subsequent political leaders of nationalism in India:

The rising generations assimilated European teaching with astounding receptivity. They quickly became nationalists, democrats and socialists. Cavour, Mazzini, Kossuth, Parnell and Mill became their teachers and heroes... A more intimate acquaintance with European culture had been attained and it was no longer accepted uncritically... The European writers who themselves criticized Europe... Ruskin, Carlyle, Tolstoy and others... played their part.¹⁶

Thus the Indian intelligentsia who got their education through English literature, imbibed English democratic principles. They were inspired to revolt not only against the orthodox social structure and the outlooks of an outmoded era, but also against alien domination. They started thinking in terms of a free national existence imbued with the democratic spirit. A reflection of these feelings is seen in their demand for the freedom of the press, expression and assemblage, representative government with widened adult franchise, and the executive responsible to the people who were to be entitled to be fully sovereign in the expression of their will. Besides, the entire nationalist movement was also organized on democratic lines, on the basis of such principles and means as annual elections and elected committees and councils, annual or periodical sessions providing full opportunity to the members of a particular nationalist party to express opinions and discuss matters openly.

Further, knowledge of English also brought within the reach of an educated Indian the most vital portion of the scientific, philosophical, sociological, and literary-artistic achievements of non-English speaking peoples.

Though the Western education was imparted by the alien regime in order to fulfil its own political and administrative

16. Hans Kohn, *A History of Nationalism in the East* (London, George Routledge & Sons Ltd., 1929), p. 118.

requirements and even to fasten the ties of closer approach and mutual understanding between the alien rulers and the indigenous ruled, yet it produced results which enhanced the cause of nationalism.

Besides the alien agencies like the Christian missionaries and governmental organizations the Indian leaders were equally interested in the popularization of the modern system of education. Among them the most prominent was Raja Ram Mohan Roy, the pioneer of progressive modern education in India. He welcomed the introduction of modern education as the main source of acquiring the scientific and democratic thought of the contemporary West. He was strongly opposed to the perpetuation of the ancient and medieval system of education in India. He believed that it would only promote superstition and authoritarianism instead of democratic and scientific ideas. We get a reflection of his views and feelings on the merits of modern education in his letter to Lord Amherst, the then Governor-General of India. This letter was written in protest against the Government's policy of Oriental Education, the imparting of which was recommended by a Special Committee. Upon the recommendation of this Committee a Sanskrit college was to be founded in Calcutta. However, Raja Ram Mohan Roy opposed it and instead demanded that the new college be utilized for imparting a liberal and enlightened system of instruction through the medium of English. He wrote :

While we looked forward with pleasing hope to the dawn of knowledge, thus promised to the rising generation, our hearts were filled with mingled feelings of delight and gratitude, we already offered our thanks to Providence for inspiring the most generous and enlightened nations of the West with the glorious ambition of the planning in Asia the arts and sciences of modern Europe.

Pointing out his reasons for opposing the opening of the Sanskrit college he stated :

The seminary [Sanskrit College]... can only be expected to load the minds of youth with grammatical niceties and metaphysical distinctions of little or no practical use to the possessors or to society. The

pupils will then acquire what was known two thousand years ago with the addition of vain and empty subtle ties... Neither can much improvement arise from such speculations as the following which are the themes suggested by the Vedanta — In what manner is the soul absorbed in the Deity? What relation does it bear to the Divine Essence? Nor will youths be fitted to be better members of society by the Vedanta doctrines which lead them to believe, that all visible things have no real existence..., sooner we escape from them and leave the world the better... The Sanskrit system of education would be the best calculated to keep this country in darkness, if such had been the policy of British legislature. But as the improvement of the native population is the object of the Government, it will consequently promote a more liberal and enlightened system of instructions, embracing Mathematics, Natural Philosophy, Chemistry, Anatomy, with other useful sciences.¹⁷

During the last years of the nineteenth century Swami Vivekananda, whose contribution in the building up of the nascent India was no less significant than Ram Mohan Roy's, laid great emphasis on the imparting of a secular education to the younger generation in India, although he wanted it impregnated with religious ideas. In this connection the following extract from his famous speech "The Future of India" deserves reproduction :

We must have a hold on the...secular education of the nation...

Till then there is no salvation for the race...

We must have life-building, man-making, character-making, assimilation of ideas...

We will make a non-sectarian temple...

All will have the right to interpret ideas, each one according to his own sect.¹⁸

17. *Raja Ram Mohan Roy: His Life: Writings and Speeches* (Madras, G.A. Natsan & Co., 1925), pp. 86-9.

18. *Speeches and Writings of Swami Vivekananda* (Madras, G.A. Natesan & Co., Seventh ed.), pp. 666-67.

In due course various social organizations like the Brahmo Samaj, the Arya Samaj, the Rama Krishna Mission, the Aligarh Movement and eminent middle class people co-operated in founding institutions imparting modern education throughout India. Despite their critical view of some of the aspects of this Western education they accepted its importance and value in the prevailing environment. Some of them put in the curriculum books emphasizing national self-respect. However, most of them retained the central theme of modern education, its anti-authoritarian liberalism, its emphasis on individual liberty and social equality, its rejection of superstition and its emphasis on modern natural sciences. The enunciation and emphasis on these new philosophical and social and ideological outlooks was really a landmark in the social and cultural evolution of the Indian people and signified a progressive change from medievalism to the modern era.

It may, however, be pointed out that Indians had limited resources for maintaining these educational institutions. They, therefore, welcomed Western missionaries and unofficial Western enterprise for the popularization of education. The attitude of the alien regime was, however, not very encouraging till 1813. They provided only a paltry sum for expenses but even that was not fully utilized. In 1855, for the whole of India with a population of nearly 200 million, the total number of educational institutions managed, aided or recognized by the Government was 1,474 catering to only 67,569 students, with a budget allotment of less than one per cent of total revenue.¹⁹ The situation was somewhat eased by the Christian missions, who maintained 1,628 schools imparting instruction to 64,000 students.²⁰

Wood's Despatch of 1854 marked the beginning of a change in the sphere of education. Although the education of the petty bourgeois classes especially received due consideration and made appreciable progress during the previous century, it is a known fact that the imperialist regime showed little concern about mass education. As late as 1866 the Under-Secretary in the Home Department, Government

19. Dr Tara Chand, *History of the Freedom Movement in India* (Government of India Publications Division, 1967), Vol. II, p. 431.

20. Ibid.

of India, Mr. Holwell, complained that "the statistical tables show that the lower classes do not in all provinces receive the proportionate share of the very large annual increase of expenditure on education since 1854." ²¹ On the other hand, for the benefit of the upper classes, the Government made special arrangements which not only isolated them from the main sections of educated petty-bourgeois class but also aimed at fostering their loyalty towards their alien rulers. In order to pursue this policy, educational centres were founded where only children of the princes, the aristocracy and the feudal lords were admitted. Most prominent among these were the Mayo College at Ajmer, the Rajkumar College at Rajkot, and the Daly College at Indore. It was ethically wrong, economically unsound, socially undemocratic and politically inexpedient, to have a small number of class-conscious educational institutions for the children of the rich.

Role of the Press

The popularization of the modern system of education and the phenomenal growth of the new social classes led to the emergence of the press in India, a very influential factor in promoting the cause of Indian nationalism. "The free press," commented Marx, "introduced for the first time into Asiatic Society, and managed principally by the common offspring of Hindus and Europeans, is a new and powerful agent of reconstruction." ²²

The new intelligentsia recognized in the printing press a vehicle of revolutionary change because of its powerful effect in revealing new ideas before the public mind. They were also aware of the power of the press as an agency for disseminating intelligence. They looked to it as the most significant medium of mass communication. They also knew that with the introduction of the art of printing they could confidently look forward to a change of substantial improvement in the socio-political life of the people. Simultaneously, the leaders of the renaissance knew very well that an alliance between their advanced ideas and the printing press would undoubtedly prove more influential

21. Dr. George Smith, *The Annals of Indian Administration in the year 1866-67*, vol. XII, Part I, p. 312.

22. Anand, n. 4, p. 60.

than dynamite in removing the hindrances in the way of the natural growth of India towards a social order governed by the philosophy of rationalism and justice.

On the political front, the nationalist movement gained impetus because the press was a very strong tool in providing the facilities of political education and propaganda. With the assistance of this powerful tool the leaders of the nationalist movement were able to familiarize the masses with doctrines and ideologies such as representative form of government, individual liberty, democratic framework of the political and social institutions, and self-government or *Swaraj*. In the columns of the various journals they put forward a critical appraisal of the measures adopted by the alien regime, and simultaneously educated the masses in the field of political problems. In the press they also discovered a powerful weapon to propagate and popularize their programmes, policies and the means of struggle enunciated by them from time to time.

It is also undeniable that without the support of the press neither could all-India conferences of nationalist organizations have been conducted successfully nor the various political movements aiming at political independence organized.

Again it was the press which made possible the exchange of views on an extensive, swift and perpetual basis among the various communities residing in the different parts of the Indian peninsula. Thus it was a powerful instrument in establishing closer social and intellectual contacts between peoples of various castes, creeds and provinces. The extensive exchange of views on programmes and problems relating to different sectors of the country led to the creation of a spirit of national collaboration in various political and social spheres.

The press also assisted in the building of a rich literature and culture, provincial in form, national in character.

Realizing the vital and revolutionary role played by the press in creating a strong national sentiment among the Indian people it will not be out of place to consider its chronological development

The printing press was conspicuous by its absence in the period preceding the establishment of British rule in India. The practice of manuscript newspapers or news gazettes prepared by the *Waqia-navis* and *Sawanih-navis* was prevalent during the days of Moghul rule in India.

Although the printing press was introduced to India by the Portuguese Jesuits in 1557 to print Christian literature, it became a powerful instrument of influencing the life of the people only in the early thirties of the 19th century.

Although the *Bengal-Gazette* had been started in Calcutta in 1816, the credit for founding a nationalist press in India goes to Raja Ram Mohan Roy who started publishing *Sambad-Kumudi*—the Moon of Intelligence—in Bengali in December 1821 and *Mirat-ul-Akhbar*—the Mirror of News—in Persian in April 1822 after the promulgation of the Act of 1818 by Lord Munro guaranteeing the right of free discussion to the press. These two were the first publications on nationalist and democratic lines. They were successful in spreading ideas of reform, liberty and philanthropy.

Of the two weeklies the *Moon* was the more prominent. In order to engage the attention of the intellectual class in matters of public interest it had cultivated a somewhat higher intellectual gravity than the *Mirror*. It provided an interesting and thought-provoking documentary picture of the feudal extravagances of Bengal gentry, of their costly and ostentatious standard of living. It also brought to light the waste of huge amounts of money by the upper classes in luxurious plays, though they were not much interested in donating to charitable or public purposes. The paper also appealed in its columns to white christians not to assume the complex of racial superiority by driving their carriages through Indian crowds recklessly. In its editorials the paper cultivated interest and inspired the intelligentsia to study the important political, social, religious and philosophical questions. It also devoted quite a good number of its columns to the study of international affairs and created public interest in enhancing the cause of Indian nationalism by publishing articles on the deplorable conditions in China and the discontent, antagonism and distress prevailing in Ireland during those years. The writings on Ireland

are of special significance as they revealed in the early era of Indian nationalism a deep and sincere feeling of support and sympathy with the struggle of the Irish people for national independence.

Besides Ram Monan Roy a number of other prominent people patronized journalism. As a result of their endeavour there came to be published a number of journals like *Samachar Darpan*, *Friend of India*, *Bombay Samachar* (1822); *Enquirer*, and *Gyananveshan*, (1826); *Banga Dut* (1830); *Jam-e-Jamshed* (1831); *Tattva-bodhini Patrika* and *Bombay Darpan* (1832) and *Digdarshan* (1840) to popularize the various socio-cultural movements in the 19th century. In 1868 was founded the *Amrita Bazar Patrika* by Motilal Ghosh. In 1879 the *Bengali* was acquired by Surendranath Banerjea. Both these papers advocated the cause of Indian nationalism and were subjected to prosecution many times for being fearless critics of the regime and unwearied advocates of Indian claims. In 1877 was sponsored *The Tribune* and 1878 *The Hindu*, by the liberal nationalists. With the growth of militant nationalism there came to be published the *Kesari* and the *Maratha* in Maharashtra by Lokamanya Tilak. In 1890 was launched *The Indian Social Reformer* in Bombay.²³ Bombay also tried to start a nationalist English newspaper. Dadabhai Naoroji brought out the *Voice of India*, a monthly in 1882. But it was merged with *Indian Spectator* later on. In the United Provinces the first nationalist paper was the *Indian Herald* (1879).

Since the press was a powerful force in assisting the growth of indigenous nationalism and of the nationalist movement it was put to severe test by the alien regime which hotly disliked, resented and regarded as a dangerous and even subversive influence the courageous and outspoken criticism levelled against many of the policies pursued by it. Most of its members regarded the Indian press as a nuisance, if not a positive source of anxiety. They agreed with Sir George Campbell that a free press was inconsistent with a despotic form of government, even if it was a paternal

23. For further Study see Dr. Tara Chand, *History of the Freedom Movement in India*, n. 9, pp. 220-26 and 449-66.

despotism.²⁴ Rarely were opportunities missed to make it difficult for the press to function.²⁵ But the very fact that the alien regime had to adopt innumerable repressive measures showed how important was the role played by the nationalist press in enhancing the cause of nationalism. Nationalist leaders naturally took the lead in organizing the movements of protest against the repressive ordinances because they knew that the curtailment of the freedom of expression would be a great loss to the cause of nationalism.

The first manifestation of such an organized protest was reflected in two Memorials submitted by Raja Ram Mohan Roy and his associates against the regulation promulgated on 14 March 1823 restricting the freedom of the press by banning the publication of the *Calcutta Journal*. After the dismissal of the petition by the Supreme Court, Ram Mohan Roy made a strong protest. He stopped publishing his Persian weekly journal, the *Mirat*, because he felt very strongly on the issue of the freedom of expression and was greatly disheartened by the promulgation of an arbitrary ordinance depriving the Indian press of the limited freedom it had enjoyed since the lifting of censorship. Raja Mohan Roy and his associates prepared another Memorial to be submitted to the King-in-Council. By taking such a bold step Ram Mohan Roy was interpreting the demands of a society changing its character from feudalism to nationalism. Being very sensitive on the issue of liberty he could not tolerate any kind of encroachment on the people's right to liberty. He strongly felt that the promulgation of the new ordinance would greatly hamper all those public and personal activities which were undertaken to diffuse scientific knowledge and to enlighten the mental vision of the people. As a prototype the second Memorial merits elaborate consideration. In his view the suppression of the freedom of the press was bound to inflict disastrous consequences both on the ruler and the ruled. He stated:

Your Majesty is well aware that a free press has never yet caused a revolution in any part of the world,

24. *Calcutta Review*, 1911, p. 144.

25. In 1823, John Adam, an officiating Governor-General, took the opportunity to promulgate a Regulation which restricted the freedom of the press.

because, while a man can easily represent the grievances arising from the conduct of the local authorities to the supreme government, and thus get them redressed, the grounds or discontent that excite revolution are removed; whereas, where no freedom of press existed, and the grievance consequently remained unrepresented and unredressed, innumerable revolutions have taken place in all parts of the globe; or if prevented by armed force of the Government, the people continued to be ready for insurrection...An argument as that a colony or distant dependency can never safely be entrusted with the liberty of the press... would be in other words to tell them that they are condemned to perpetual oppression and degradation from which they can have no hope of being raised during the existence of British rule ..

Exposing the weakness of the alien rule he added :

It is well-known that despotic Governments naturally desire the suppression of any freedom of expression which might tend to expose their acts to the obloquy which ever attends the exercise of tyranny or oppression, and the argument they constantly resort to, is, that the spread of knowledge is dangerous to the existence of all legitimate authority, since, as a people become enlightened, they will discover that by a unity of effort, the many may easily shake off the yoke of the few, and thus become emancipated from the restraints of power altogether.²⁶

But, above all, he strongly felt that the imposition of the ordinance on the press resulted in the curtailment of whatever civil, political and religious freedom the people enjoyed. He also believed that such restrictions would only pave the way for retarding the progress and development of the people. He, therefore, wrote further :

26. *Raja Ram Mohan Roy, His Life: Writings & Speeches*, n. 17, pp. 66-72.

The abolition of this most precious of their privileges, is the more appalling to your Majesty's faithful subjects, because it is a violent infringement of their civil and religious rights.²⁷

The well-argued appeal too was rejected. The Privy-Council did not agree to intervene. The appeal, nevertheless, is an interesting material. About it Miss Collet commented, "It may be regarded as the *Arespagitica* of Indian history. Alike in diction and argument, it forms a noble landmark in the progress of English culture in the East."²⁸ It paved the way along which India's political agitation was to be conducted throughout the previous century.

On the other hand, the Government continued to apply at short intervals repressive measures. In 1857, Canning sought to control the newspapers by the Press Act. Again, an Act to regulate the printing presses and newspapers and for the registration of books was passed in 1867. The infamous Section 124A was incorporated in the Indian Penal Code to crush the activities of Wahabis which were causing great alarm to the regime. And finally there was the Vernacular Press Act of 1878, which was repealed on 19 January 1882 on the advice of Lord Ripon.

Besides these ill-conceived measures of the Government which created much discontent, some fresh provocations were made and new problems appeared which revived bitter opposition. The Ilbert Bill of 1883, the Age of Consent Bill of 1891, and the Council Reform Act of 1892, were some of these issues. The policy of Divide and Rule in Hindu-Muslim riots²⁹ further aggravated the estrangement between the alien regime and Indians. In consequence, a new trend was clearly discernible in the writings of the press. Interest in socio-religious reform which was so far dominant, ceased to monopolise attention. Interest in political affairs came to be noticed and considered in the press. A number of factors were responsible for this alteration. First, the revival of antiquity and the glory of the forefathers was greatly emphasized. Secondly, there was the pressure of global

27. Ibid, p. 74.

28. Sophia D. Collet, *Life and Letters of Raja Ram Mohan Roy*, (Calcutta, 1962, 3rd ed.), p. 177.

happenings, for West was stormed by movements of national resurgence; and thirdly, internal burdens were becoming intensified in the various sectors of national life. As the elected bodies were conspicuous by their absence, the Press became "the Parliament in permanent session." Its columns gave ample space to the debates on the policies and administration of the regime. It conveyed to the Government what the Indians thought of their executive and legislative measures.

Literature

The impact of modernization also reflected in the sphere of literature. Despite its many disadvantages the alien rule proved a blessing in disguise for Indian literature. Abolition of the old feudalism by British rule marked a turning point in the cultural sphere. Poets and writers were no longer bound to display hypocritical reverence and high-sounding praise to the princes and aristocrats. They were set free "to move out of the courts to the courtyards." Gone were the days in which they lived and composed according to the taste of the aristocratic patrons. The new formative forces, like the press, the rise of the middle class intelligentsia as well as the infusion of modern scientific ideas, gave birth to certain broad features which are easily recognizable in most of the Indian languages. Among these features the most prominent were the introduction of political, social and psychological issues as literary themes, the resort to individualistic expression, and the emergence of realism as a recognised technique in all literary forms. Above all, poetry which had been the predominant form of expression in the sphere of literature, now retreated into the background and continued to lose its importance and inspiration. On the other hand, prose which is the instrument of information and rational thought, made its appearance and developed rapidly, so that within half a century it became a powerful and inspiring vehicle of expression. This new trend marked the discard of the medieval ways of thinking and the commencement of the modernization of the brain of India.

In Bengal, the renaissance in literature came in the very beginning of the 19th century. It was a projection of the enthusiasm for Europe and its intellectual emissaries. Activities organised in the sphere of indigenous literature

formed one of the most significant facets of the many-sided phenomenon of *Banglar Jagaran* (the Awakening of Bengal) which is supposed to have commenced with the activities of the missionaries of Serampur and the social activities of Raja Ram Mohan Roy in Calcutta in 1815, and the foundation of Hindu College in Calcutta in 1817, and to have reached its summit in the latter half of the last century. From the pen of Raja Ram Mohan Roy, who must be recognised as the precursor and the leader of the writers of this age, there emerged the first really powerful Bengali prose, manifesting itself in the forms of pamphlets advocating speedy but steady reforms in the domain of religion, morals and social practices which had become the centres of reaction, orthodoxy and superstition. With his keen and virile mind displaying the spirit of critical enquiry, Raja Ram Mohan Roy left behind the legacy which greatly benefitted the middle class Bengali intelligentsia of the 19th century. The establishment of Hindu College in 1817 brought into existence a new and dynamic force, a group of the urban middle-class intelligentsia, or the educated *Bhadraloks* of Bengal, who virtually shaped the life and ideology of Bengal for about a century through their literary and philosophical investigations. This new generation emerging from Hindu College took bold steps in the coming years towards the eradication of social evils and development of free thinking, thus creating a strong ferment of ideas which infused the social life and literature with new vigour and scientific outlook. The first among these intellectuals were the young thinkers known as 'Young Bengal' for whom even the pace of reforms introduced by the Ram Mohanites was not enough. Through their writings they advocated and yearned for a speedy and almost wholesale overhauling of oriental things. Thus there emerged the camp of the "Young Bengal" in modern Bengalee literature—indigenous in content but modern in form. Most promising among these 'Young Bengal' writers was Michael Madhusudan Dutt who mastered a number of European languages, old as well as new, and ended his career by emerging as the first great poet of Bengali literature, indeed, its "august founder". Through his many-sided literary activities, he pioneered a new movement in Bengali literature. "He flung, as it were, a bridge," observes Kazi Abdul Wadud, "across the gulf that had divided so long our land from Europe and bound them

firmly. Europe was no longer alien...It was a great gain indeed for the renascent spirit of Bengal.”²⁹

It was also in the days of ‘Young Bengal’ that institutions like the School Society, School Book Society, Academic Association of Derozio and the Bethune Society, emerged and played a significant role in creating intellectual centres in Bengal.

Towards the end of the third decade of the last century, Maharishi Devendra Nath Tagore founded a society known as *Tattwa-bodhini Sabha* with its literary periodical ‘*Tattwa-bodhini Patrika*’ with whose publication both Akshoy Kumar and Ishwar Chandra Vidyasagar were closely associated. Bengali prose got a great impetus as a result of the articles published in this magazine. Simultaneously the production of *Kulin Kula-Sarvasva*, written by Ram Narayan Tarkarnta in 1854, manifested the emergence of a new Bengali drama as a vehicle of social reforms. Summing up the literary activities of the Bengali intelligentsia in creating national consciousness, Gopal Halder in his article ‘*Bengali Literature Before and After 1857*’ comments: “There lay then behind the intelligentsia of 1857 a ‘colonial renaissance’ at least 40 years old. Two generations of the intellectuals had been reared on the liberal bourgeois ideology, and they energetically tried to overthrow the deadweight of Indian feudal ideas and institutions.”³⁰

While on the eastern corner of India, the Bengali intellectual writers, through their prose and poetry, were playing a significant role in fostering cultural nationalism, on the Western coast of India there was emerging a new intelligentsia, a counterpart of the Bengali intelligentsia, in Gujarat. After the battle of Kirkee, fought in 1818, Gujarat was annexed by the forces of the East India Company. With the establishment of British rule there came the powerful impact of Western civilization in Gujarat. It led to the establishment of the Elphinstone Institute in Bombay. Dissemination of modern Western ideas through the medium of English widened the mental horizon of the young men studying in the

29. *Contemporary Indian Literature* (New Delhi, Sahitya Akademy, 1957), p. 19.

30. P.C. Joshi, ed., *Rebellion 1857, A Symposium* (New Delhi, People's Publishing House, 1957), p. 258.

Institute. With deep surprise they became aware of the apparent contrast between the social systems prevailing in India and those in the West European countries. This new awareness plunged Gujarati youth directly into the activities of social reform. The indigenous caste system, the low treatment meted out to their womanhood, especially widows, the vices of untouchability, child marriage, child-widowhood, the age-disparity in marriages and the various taboos, superstitions and orthodox practices now appeared to them to be outmoded phenomena eating into the very vitals of their social organism. Hence they pledged to remove all these social evils completely through their satirical writings as well as other social activities. The West, of course, was to be their model and ideal in their struggle against these social drawbacks and limitations. They willingly co-operated with enlightened British philanthropists engaged in founding cultural institutions in Gujarat. Eminent personalities like Alexandar Kinloch Forbes invited the famous contemporary Gujarati poet Dalpat Ram to serve the Gujarat Vernacular Society founded by him in Ahmedabad in 1848. Dalpat Ram was the eminent poet of this first phase of reform. Through his poems, full of humour and brilliant wit, he advocated widow-marriage. In another long poem entitled "The Invasion by Industry", he lamented over the deteriorating condition of the indigenous crafts in 1859. This was all that Dalpat could do to enhance the cause of cultural nationalism in India. However, the task of stressing the positive values of Western culture was left to his young contemporary, Navalram Narmad, a young Gujarati who eagerly responded to all that appeared to be progressive in the Western ideologies and outlooks. The first thing that attracted him was the spirit of individuality and respect for human personality. He eagerly grasped the contents of this spirit and staunchly advocated its immense significance in the regeneration of the new social organism. He was the first to idealize the importance of freedom through his recitations from public pulpits. But no less important for him was his love for his country which was manifested through prose instinct with new life. Due to these progressive activities he has always been remembered as a pioneer of modern Gujarati literature and mainly responsible for ushering in the new era in it. Indeed, he has come to be regarded as a social thinker laying the foundation of the renaissance in the Indian life.

In Maharashtra the first phase of the modern period in Marathi literature is considered to have begun in 1814 and lasted up to 1874. This phase set the stage for the gradual reorientation of Maharashtra that had seemed to lose all its vitality due to enslavement by an alien power after the treaty of Bassein. The new phase marked the revitalization and revival of a society which had completely disintegrated, lost its traditions and dried up its literature during the perpetual hard struggle of 50 years between the alien and the indigenous Maratha rulers. New forms from the West were borrowed and adopted under the able guidance of enlightened and benevolent British administrators and Christian missionaries. In 1814, the Serampur Press issued the first printed Marathi book, *Sinhasan Battisi*, M. Elphinstone, a liberal-minded Governor of Bombay, founded the Bombay Native Education Society in 1820 and sanctioned it a grant of Rs. 50,000/-. In 1822 came into existence the School Book Society which encouraged the production of books by offering awards and prizes. Writers started writing in a strange Anglicized Marathi style known as *Ingraji Avtar* of Marathi prose. All these endeavours were the harbingers of a powerful renaissance which marked the spirit of self-assertion together with a desire to learn and adopt the new, progressive ideas of the West. Among the writers of this new era, Baba Padmanji was the first who through his novels like *Yamung Paryatan* written in Anglicized style brought into lime-light the decay of the orthodox Hindu social organism. He was followed by men like G.H. Deshmukh and Jyotirao Phula who made the indigenous people conscious of the social degeneration. In *Prabhakar* journal a famous writer Loka-hitawadi contributed *Shatapatern*, a series of essays suggesting a rational outlook on social and political issues and exposing many social vices. He wished and endeavoured to eradicate them and reorganize the society on Western lines.

Thus prose became the instrument for propagating secular and scientific knowledge. In 1831, *Sara Samgraha* or the compendium of sciences and arts was published. In 1833 followed a translation of *Conservations on Natural Philosophy*.

With the advent of English education English poets were introduced to the Marathi language. New techniques were adopted. Kunte's *Raja Shivaji* is the foremost production of this new vision. Besides, acquaintance with English literature

marked a deeper change in the approach of the poets. Worldly life gradually began to acquire an importance in poetry, which led to the discarding of the philosophy of renunciation and the revival of *Karma-Yoga*. This innovation undermined the importance of devotionism so deeply rampant in the old literature.

The gap of standardizing the Marathi language was fulfilled by preparations of dictionaries and grammar. Old Marathi literature was revived. The environment of modernism, which was spreading through education, gave impetus to the growth of intellectual independence and curiosity. A number of books in English were translated and treatises on science, economics and technical subjects were written. Simultaneously, Sanskrit books were rendered into Marathi.

Along with the revitalization of the Indian literature in various languages, there developed the practice of Indian writing in English. Thus grew up 'Indo-Anglican' literature. As already stated, the institutions imparting modern education through the medium of English grew in number, commanding more and more prestige in the eyes of the Indian people. Quite a fair number of the members of the rising middle class thus thoroughly acquainted themselves with the European (and especially English) literature and culture. This section of the intellectuals was inspired with a great desire to "put India once more on the cultural map of the world". It yearned to make the passive-minded country at least in appearance, if not in actual practice—active and articulate once more. This meant naturally that they should themselves pick up the pen and write in English so that they could without much difficulty draw the attention of their alien rulers towards the complex problems and vicissitudes confronted by the people. Secondly, they knew that their writing in English about the past greatness of India would make the alien power aware of the fact that the legacy left by the ancestors of the people was in no case a hollow and bankrupt one. Thirdly, they also considered it advantageous that something written in English was to be read widely by the people residing in other provinces totally ignorant of the indigenous languages other than their own. Earliest and most prominent among these Indo-Anglican writers was Raja Ram Mohan Roy, truly a pioneering spirit.

His forceful personality revealed itself in innumerable prose-writings like *Precepts of Jesus* and others vindicating the cause of social reform. Raja Ram Mohan Roy was followed by Michael Madhusudan Dutt despite the fact that the latter belonged mainly to Bengali literature and had little to do with Indo-Anglican literature. His book *Captive India* is a narrative poem symbolizing the chivalry of the Rajput race. Such writings created great confidence and national consciousness in the intelligentsia.

In 1857 came the great upheaval which shook the very foundations of British power in, at least, the northern part of India. It was a powerful expression of the unorganized yet intense national sentiment. It was a historical landmark in our national evolution, a mighty event which has been regarded by the nationalist-minded people as the inspirer of the national liberation movement launched by the militant forces during the last quarter of the 19th century. During this uprising there emerged innumerable folk songs manifesting the growth of national consciousness in the people. For instance, the brief but beautiful folk song detailed below composed by an unknown contemporary folk poet throws some light on the revolutionary passion of the freedom-fighters of 1857 :

Storm in the river
Far off is Englishtan
Hurry up, hurry up, quit
You perfidious Firinghi!³¹

31. By the courtesy of P.C. Joshi, former Secretary-General of the Communist Party of India.

Equally moving is the following extract from the poem composed by Ernest Charles Jones, a Chartist leader of England, during those tumultuous days:

When erst the West its warrior-march began
The eyes of earth were drawn to Hindostan:
Long time the clouds stood gathering, tier on tier.
And thickening thunders, muttering, growled more near...
Through plain and valley pressed uneasy heat,
That burnt Volcanic under English feet..
Victorious deluge -- from a hundred heights
Rolls the fierce torrent of a people's right,
And Sepoy soldiers, waking, band by band,
At last remember they have a fatherland...

[Reprinted in *The Times of India* (Delhi), 11 August 1957, p. 6. cols. iii & iv].

These folk songs on 1857 not only realistically reflect the spirit of the period but they are also a highly valuable part of national heritage. They contain the first patriotic poems and are the only available records embodying the outlook, sentiments and aspirations of the common people during the 1857 national uprising. They are thus valuable, historical documents displaying the awakening of the spirit of national consciousness.

Being the court language and the language spoken by a considerable number of people residing in the areas which were the centres of national struggle of 1857, it was obvious that in Urdu a large volume of literature dealing with the struggle was produced. Out of the many works written during the struggle the important ones are: *Dastan-i-Ghadar* by Zaheer Dehlavi, *Tarikh-i-Sarkashi-i-Bijnore* by Sir Syed Ahmed, *Risala-i-Asbab-i-Bagawat-i-Hind* (A treatise on the causes of Indian Revolt) by Sir Syed Ahmed, *Tarikh-i-Hind*, Vol. IX by Zakaullah, *Roznamcha-i-Ghadar* (The Diary of the Mutiny) written by an Englishman and translated by Dr Nazir Ahmad, *Agha Hajju "Sharafs"*, a poem on the plunder of Lucknow, many poems of Wajid Ali Shah, Munir Shikohabadi, Barq Lacknawi and *Fughan-i-Delhi* (the lament of Delhi), a collection of some fifty poems first published in 1861. Mohammed Hussain "Azad" composed a poem on "Victory of Armies of the East" over the British. It was published in *Delhi Urdu Akhbar* of 24 May, 1857. But above all were the writings of Mirza Asadullah Khan "Ghalib", the renowned Urdu poet of the period.³² During the national uprising he chose to live in Delhi under the rule of the freedom-fighters and kept a diary in the Persian language of day-to-day events of this ever memorable period. The work is entitled *Dastambo*. It shows that he did not hesitate to sympathize with the sufferings of his companions. But he expressed his sympathy in his masterly enigmatic style of writing — skillfully concealing the meaning even when he professed to disclose it. Despite the many omissions knowingly introduced by him, the diary throws light on the dynamism of this great movement of national resistance in the following extract.

32. All the Urdu writings except that of "Ghalib" gave a mixed reception to the national uprising of 1857.

And lo! there emerged from every nook and corner a soldier, from every pathway a platoon and from each direction an army, and all began to move about on the land... These were wonderful times and the hour of those who have triumphed. Just now within and without the city of Delhi, there have gathered something like fifty thousand infantry and cavalry... Day in and day out shells from both sides fall from the air like common pebbles... The warriors of the royal force daily gather from all over (the city) after sunrise, go to fight like lions... For two or three days every nook and corner of the city from the Kashmiri Gate onwards was converted into a regular battlefield.³³

These descriptions were as inspiring to the growth of national consciousness of the Indian people in the years following the uprising as descriptions of the Battle of Stalingrad fought during the Second World War are to the citizens of Soviet Russia. These vigorous writings played a very significant role in inspiring numerous subsequent struggles for national freedom from alien domination. Particularly, all endeavours taking the shapes of armed revolts in later years had been revitalized by the rich legacy left by the tradition of 1857. Not only did the prominent leaders of the first national upsurge like Rani Laxmi Bai, Kunwar Singh and Tantya Tope gain a cherished place as national heroes in the consciousness of people engaged in the process of complete independence in subsequent years, but they also did become the subject of numerous folk-songs, prose writings and poems. These poems, songs and folk-songs sung in the mass gatherings held in rural and urban areas created a fervour of national consciousness.

After the suppression of the struggle for national liberation of 1857 the process of exploitation and draining of wealth to the metropolitan country, started with the beginning of the occupation by Britain, was intensified. The aliens did not display interest in the systematic economic planning and development of the country. The *litteratures* of the

33. *Dastambo*: included in *Kulliyat-i-Ghalib*, a collection of Ghalib's Persian works; translation by K.M. Ashraf (Lucknow, 1872), pp. 385-86 & 389.

contemporary period in India could not remain indifferent to the process of economic transformation. A perpetual feeling of national humiliation and misery started seeping through their prose, poetry and drama. These writings indicated a feeling of sorrow that the country had been humbled and laid waste by alien rulers. This awareness is reflected in the famous Hindi play *Bharat Durdasha* written by Bhartendu Harishchandra:

The sorrows of India are too heart-rending,
People are blinded by fear,
they are poor and destitute under British rule...
The wealth of land is drained away;
Dearness, disease and death grow apace
Everyday our sorrow multiply;
Taxes are an additional affliction.
Oh! the sorrows of India are overwhelming.

Bhartendu Harishchandra explains how the indigenous trade and crafts had been ruined and the people turned into destitutes:

By their machines they plunder us,
Wealth declines everyday and sorrows multiply.

Another important personality of the period pleading vigorously the nationalist cause was Dina Bandhu Mitra in Bengali literature. In his poems, he did not hesitate to go so far as to express and maintain "rather have in affectionate regard the dog of your country than the gospel of the foreigners". His writings are full of innumerable references to the famine and other significant events of the period. He did not lag behind in upholding the cause of the peasants engaged in cultivating indigo in Bengal. His renowned satirical song *chetan* on the *nilkar* and the indigo-planters, written in 1859, very clearly indicates the temper "We Bengalis are a herd of cattle, Oh Mother, Queen Victoria", the poet seems to plead sarcastically, "We don't even know how to use our horns. The fodder, grass and husks of corn are all that we want. Let not your white officers then despoil us of that."

But this depressive state of affairs became intolerable and culminated in the indigo revolt of the peasantry in Central

Bengal in 1858, followed by peasants' revolts in other parts of the country in subsequent years. The nationally conscious intelligentsia could no longer remain indifferent to these revolutionary happenings. And they plunged into the *Nil Vidroha* (Indigo Revolt) and displayed their patriotism by fighting with all their revolutionary passion for the cause of the oppressed peasantry. The finest living example of this passion was Harish Chandra Mukherji who launched incessantly a fiery denunciation of the indigo-planters in the columns of his periodical *Hindu Patriot* and for three years (till his death in 1861) in championing the cause of the toilers, he spared neither time nor finances. This was the first manifestation of writers fulfilling their role in national life and emerging as leaders of the oppressed sections of the community. By these actions they produced a new fervour of national consciousness. They lamented in forceful language over the "fallen state of mother India", her servitude to "foreigners" and exhorted their countrymen to foster an undying spirit of national unity paving the way for the final phase of complete independence from the alien domination. And these sentiments of national uplift were expressed in a typical pattern. They picked a theme from the pre-British period of Indian history to display their hatred and anguish against the *Yavanas* (in these contexts meant to imply the British rulers) or they would select a theme from the ancient scriptures and lores which supplied them with an invader-invaded or oppressor-oppressed plots, thus indirectly disapproving the existence of alien rule.

A brief appraisal of the literary developments in some of the languages of India displayed the common tendencies in the growth of the Indian mind all over the country. The Indian mind was receptive to Western thought and Western outlooks and techniques of expression, yet at the same time it was deeply attached to its traditional heritage. It was willing to modify, even to reject, much of the old, but it was not prepared to discard the inheritance of antiquity in totality. Its attempt was to conserve what was believed to be of permanent and abiding value in its own civilization, and to assimilate from the West what was essential for building up a new society. India's attempt to synthesize the orient and the occident, gave birth to a multiplicity of system of thought. But its main achievement was to inculcate a common outlook and a community of ideas and

sentiments, which were the pre-requisite of the growth of national consciousness.

Cultural Renaissance

Another factor which gave expression to the rising national consciousness was the emergence of socio-religious reform movements, what are popularly called the Indian Renaissance. This Renaissance was a rationalist, liberal and progressive humanitarian movement which undermined to a great extent, if not rendered entirely defunct, the importance of preaching the philosophy of renunciation adhered to so strongly in pre-British India and which had become an integral part of Indian character. The fundamental dictum of the renunciation *Brahma Satyam Jagat Mithya* laid down that only Brahma is true, this world is an illusion and transient; it is useless to devote time to the world so far as the refinement and progress of human civilization was concerned. Beauty and knowledge and all else we value on earth could attain perfection only in the other world. Hence the principal aim of life for an individual should be to renounce this world, to be a *sanyasi*, and meditate in ceaseless contemplation and attain salvation. Instead of caring about his existing worldly life he should thoroughly engage himself in improving his prospects in the next world. Thus there developed a strong tendency of subscribing to the theory of self-negation and self-effacement, believing in God as an eternal truth and the entire world merely an emanation. The moral stress was laid more and more upon quietism and retirement from the world because to live in the world meant to act, which was regarded as leading to rebirth. In its turn it meant the cessation of the Release of Soul. The state of *Nirvana* came to be regarded as actionless aim or even as extinction.³⁴

Such an approach towards human life proved a very great disaster and curse for India. The ego in the man was

34. The fact that most of the religious systems which originated in India gave preference to ascetic inaction in comparison to the life of stress and struggle can be documented by the following authoritative observation :
 "These are the two elements common to all Indian thought: the pursuit of *Moksha* as the final ideal and the ascetic spirit of the discipline recommended for its attainment. As in the other Indian systems *Moksha* is conceived here (*Visistad-Vaita*) also as a freedom from mundane existence." [M. Hiriyanna, *Outlines of Indian Philosophy* (London, George Allen & Unwin), pp. 24 & 412.]

disarmed, suppressed and made inoperative. There was even a lurking fear that the world would enmesh him if he tarried here too long. Such ideas sapped the energies of the people and encouraged them to escape knowingly from the difficulties of life instead of grappling with them. They fostered an outlook of non-worldliness which encouraged people to be delighted in wasting all their valuable time in speculating over the joys of *Nirvana*. The Hindi poet, "Dinkar" points out that "Repetition on a philosophical level that life is unreal and an illusion, gradually led to the growth of a strong conviction in the minds of Hindus that life is really an illusion, and day by day their faith in the welfare and regeneration of the country and society dwindled. Every Hindu right since his birth was cradled in the conviction that the best of all the actions was to meditate for the next world, no matter even if he loses his identity in this worldly existence. That is why, the Hindus absorbed in the bells, beads, garlands and oblations at the temples, never became aware of the fact that their country was enslaved or that they were becoming poor and destitutes. How strange it is that the philosopher who called religion an opium of the masses was born in Europe, while religion utterly destroyed the Hindus".³⁵

Spellbound by this philosophy of renunciation Indians remained indifferent towards the day-to-day political and social events in Indian peninsula. This philosophy of pseudo-mysticism produced men about whom a Western scholar has remarked that "as citizens they are undeniably a grave scandal and a useless burden to the state; they sap the national prosperity and demoralize the national character."³⁶ Thus Indians could not differentiate between independence and slavery. To them joy and pain, gain and loss, and victory and defeat were equal. The significance of the existing worldly life was belittled since the majority considered it polluted and impure while renunciation was the brightest jewel obtainable, however difficult the mission might appear to be. The constant preaching of this negative outlook for centuries culminated in transforming even those who were leading a worldly life into *sanyasis*, at least

35. Ramdhari Singh "Dinkar", *Sanskriti Ke Char Adhyaya* (Delhi, Rajpal & Sons, 1956), p. 496.

36. R. A. Nicholson, *Introduction to the translation of Diwan-i-Shamsh-i-Tabriz* (Cambridge University Press, 1898), p. iv.

mentally if not physically. Intoxicated with the cult even these people waited with anxiety for the day when they would also become *sanyasis* and achieve salvation. Instead of fighting and challenging the disasters inflicted on the country by the foreign invaders and repudiating the evil social customs they considered worship in the temples for salvation the highest motive of their existence.

While the Western world prospered and grew rich day by day as a result of scientific and other investigations, Indians continued to wander in the darkness of superstition and ignorance. They believed it to be wrong to fight against tyranny. It is, therefore, not a strange phenomenon that we do not come across a single prose-writer or poet in Indian literature produced before the advent of the nineteenth century, who dared to raise his voice against tyranny and slavery. Dynasty after dynasty rose and tumbled down; revolution succeeded revolution; Hindu, Pathan, Moghul, Maratha and Sikh came to power and fell one by one but the indigenous masses as a whole remained indifferent to these political happenings. With deep-entrenched passivism they remained the booty for the possession of which different claimants took to the sword. This unchangeableness of Indian society presented a striking contrast with the perpetual dissolution and refounding of the Indian Kingdoms, and the never-ceasing transformations of the dynasties. "The structure... of society remains untouched by the storm-clouds of the political sky", said Karl Marx in a vivid and picturesque description of this never-changing phenomenon of indigenous social organism.³⁷ However, it would be wrong to believe that the cult of renunciation was entirely responsible for the adoption of such a passive and negative attitude. There were other factors equally responsible for it. Among them the most prominent was the imbalanced structure of the social organism.

Equally wrong would it be to presume that simultaneously there did not exist any dogma or cult to challenge this obsolete phenomenon. There did exist the philosophy of acquisitiveness which warned the people about the dangers inherent in such an apathetic attitude. But its voice was rendered into a dim echo by the cult of renunciation.

37. Anand, ed., n. 4, p. 71.

However, as a result of the fusion of the scientific, rational and revolutionary democratic knowledge imparted by the introduction of the modern Western education during British rule there grew up a new intelligentsia which imbibed the new scientific outlook with rapidity. They challenged the obsolescence of the old social institutions, religious outlooks and ethical conceptions derived from the ancient cult of renunciation and they felt that they were obstacles in awakening the national consciousness. They, therefore, launched various movements to reform and to revolutionize the ancient obsolete social structure.

The beginning of these movements was the beginning of the cultural renaissance in India, which awakened the indigenous people from their long slumber. The leaders of the renaissance recognized that the greatest blunder in their entire history was adherence to the dogma of renunciation. All preached openly that the *road of Karma-yoga or acquisitiveness* was the road to success and one who still had a penchant for renunciation was an escapist running away from the realities of life. Even *Vedanta*, so far believed to be the philosophy of renunciation, was reinterpreted in a new scientific manner. The new interpretation emphasized an action without bothering about the its ultimate result.

The upholders of the doctrine of *Karma-yoga* laid down that for centuries all the great religious teachers of India had taught the serenity and the calmness of 'resist not evil' which was believed to be the highest ideal of morality. They warned that the people should also be aware of the consequences if the doctrine was practised in the present state of the world. Was it not true, they asked, that the faithful practice of the non-resisting of evil would inevitably lead to the disastrous consequences? Would not the entire social fabric fall to pieces? Would not the violent and wicked elements of the social organism bring under their possession the whole property of society? In such an environment the practice of non-resistance was bound ultimately to culminate in the complete dissolution of the social set-up. It would be equivalent to condemning a big proportion of humanity. This kind of constant self-denial and self-condemnation would produce more weakness than any other vice. Hence, to counteract the impact of such an obsolete phenomenon it was the duty of man "to resist all evils, mental or physical, let

him act, let him fight, let him strike straight from the shoulder". And this resistance of evil would be a step on the road towards the manifestation of the highest power. In support of their thesis the upholders of *Karma-yoga* quoted from *Bhagwad Gita* wherein Lord Krishna called Arjuna, a warrior-prince, a hypocrite and a coward, because of his refusal to fight, or even offer resistance to adversaries who were friends and relatives. His "love" compelled him to forget duty, to fight for the deliverance of his country and for law and order.

Although he was the foremost representative of sectarian Hindu revivalism, Bankim Chandra Chatterji upheld Krishna as the ideal man, the perfection of human personality, "the wisest and the greatest of the Hindus." ³⁸ In his another writing *Dharmatattva* he described Krishna in the following words: "He who by the strength of his arm subdued the wicked, by the power of his wisdom unified India, by the power of his knowledge, proclaimed a unique selfless religion Him, I salute... He, who contains within himself alone Buddha, Christ, Mohammad, and Ramchandra, who is the source of all strength, of all virtue..., of all love, whether he be God or not, I salute him." ³⁹

Besides, the knowledge of the revolutionary doctrines enunciated in Europe made the intelligentsia aware of the encroachment on the Indian people's sovereignty by an alien power. They realised that Europe was advanced not only because it possessed an armoury of new weapons but also because of its adoption and assimilation of the attitude of acquisitiveness towards worldly life. It was searching truth not by running away from life but by penetrating its secret strongholds.

Thus the story of the Indian renaissance is the story of India's acceptance of the doctrine of acquisitiveness.

The pioneer of this renaissance was Raja Ram Mohan Roy, who devoted his efforts to the reorientation of the

38. Bankim Chandra Chatterji, *Krishna Charitra*, ed. by B.N. Bandyopadhyaya and S.K. Das (Calcutta, 1940), pp. 283.

39. Bankim Chandra Chatterji, *Dharmatattva*, ed. by B.N. Bandyopadhyaya and S.K. Das (Calcutta, 1940), pp. 20-21.

religion which had been completely monopolized and commercialized by the corrupt priestly class interested in keeping the general masses ignorant by feeding them on superstitions and fears relating to something mystical beyond this life. Raja Ram Mohan Roy had "come to be acknowledged not only as the initiator, but the authentic voice of a many-sided movement of reformation — acknowledged not only in India, but in the West... It is true that he represents the most luminous point of the India of his times and his personality lights up the vista ahead... The new order in India demanded a new type of man — the self-made man, and from the ruins of old hierarchies in varying stages of decay self-made men were already beginning to spring up to meet the demand. Ram Mohan Roy seemed to be a self-made man in the making."⁴⁰ He rejected unequivocally all that was sectarian, dogmatic and uncritical as it was incompatible with a rational attitude. He strongly believed that no proposition ought to be accepted as valid or right until it had been submitted to the critique of rationalism. The preaching of such a scientific doctrine was indirectly a challenge to the philosophy of renunciation and all that which bred social evils in the indigenous social organism. He had realized that if India had to make progress and achieve social and political advance she would have to rid herself of all hindrances to the new regeneration. A reflection of this sentiment is recorded in one of his letters written to a friend on 18 January 1818. He says :

I regret to say that the present system of religion adhered to by the Hindoos is not well calculated to promote their political interests... and the multitude of religious rites and ceremonies and laws of purification has totally disqualified them from undertaking any difficult enterprise. It is, I think, necessary that some change should take place in their religion, at least for the sake of their political advantage and social comfort.⁴¹

A direct challenge to the philosophy of renunciation and

40. Comment by Iqbal Singh, *Raja Ram Mohan Roy* (Bombay, Asia Publishing House, 1958), pp. 6 & 63.

41. Satis C. Chakravarti, ed., *The Father of Modern India*, Commemoration Volume of Ram Mohan Roy Centenary Celebrations, 1933 containing important excerpts from his writings (Calcutta, Office of the Ram Mohan Roy Centenary Committee, 1935), p. 92.

the fatal incubus of ancient abstractions came from Swami Vivekananda, the founder of Rama Krishna Mission. He tried to awaken national consciousness through his preachings deriving inspiration from the philosophy of *Karma-Yoga* :

An ideal which is too high makes a nation weak and degraded... In our country the old ideal is to sit in a cave and meditate and die. To go ahead of others in salvation is wrong. One must learn sooner or later, that one cannot get salvation if one does not try to seek the salvation of his brother. You must combine in your life immense idealism with immense practicability.⁴²

Through his mastery of a clear, simple and forcible style and an unequalled erudition he exhorted his countrymen to be no longer hypnotized by renunciation. He told them that there were higher objectives than sitting in a cave to meditate in the situation through which the country was passing. In an address delivered at the Triplicane Literacy Society in Madras after his return from the World Parliament of Religions he stated :

Everyone going to be a Yogi, everyone to meditate! It cannot be. The whole day mixing with the world, with Karma-Kanda, and in the evening sitting down and blowing through your nose! Is it so easy? Should Rishis come flying through the air, because you have blown three times through the nose. Is it a joke? It is all nonsense. What is needed is *Chitta-shuddi*, purification of the heart. And how does that come? The first of all worship is the worship of the Virat,—of those all around us... The first Gods that we have to worship are our own countrymen.⁴³

Incessantly he pleaded for a revolutionary transformation of the social, religious and cultural background of India.

42. *Speeches and Writings of Swami Vivekananda*, n. 18, pp. 406. For further Study see *ibid*, pp. 407 & 615.

43. *The Complete Works of Swami Vivekananda* Advaita Ashrama, Mayavati, Almora, Himalayas, 1932, Fourth edition) Vol. III, pp. 300-301.

Advocating complete revolt against the traditional rituals he thundered:

Let us throw away all the paraphernalia of worship—blowing the conch and ringing the bell, and waving the lights before the Image... Let us throw away all pride of learning and study of the Sastras and all *Sadhanas* for the attainment of personal *Mukti*.⁴⁴

Weakness, cowardice and illness among Indians angered him. The constant theme of his speeches was: "Above all, be strong, be manly." He exhorted: "Anything that makes you weak physically, intellectually and spiritually reject as poison; there is no life in it, it cannot be true."⁴⁵ He believed in a spirit that would inculcate national self-respect. He abhorred contemplative idleness and passivity in religion. He asserted, "who cares for your *Bhakti* and *Mukti*? Who cares what your Scriptures say? I will go into a thousand hells cheerfully, if I can rouse my countrymen immersed in Tamas (inertia), to stand on their own feet and be *men* with the spirit of Karma-Yoga."⁴⁶ He wished in all spheres of activity to awaken that austere elevation of spirit which aroused heroism.⁴⁷

In the immature stages the emergence of national consciousness also found its expression in the sphere of religion. The inherent antithesis between the religious attitudes, practices and framework on the one hand, and the stark realities of the new socio-economic organism inevitably led to the emergence of a number of religious reform movements in India.⁴⁸ All these movements were a manifestation of an endeavour to reinterpret the ancient religions in a new light, to make them conversant with the rapidly developing ideals of nationalism and democracy, the by-products of the new structure. As such, these religious reform movements played a progressive role, in spite of their limited rational

44. Romain Rolland, *The Life of Vivekananda and the Universal Gospel*, translated from the original French by Dr. Malcolm Smith (Mayavati, Almora, 1953), pp. 165-66.

45. *Ibid.*, p. 112.

46. *Ibid.*, p. 126.

47. *Ibid.*, p. 129.

48. For further study see Dr. Tara Chand, n. 9, pp. 430-66.

approach. They were the first nationalist break-through in the concrete walls of medievalism.

The declaration of their faith by almost all the leaders of the renaissance in unequivocal terms in the fundamental unity of all the various religions prevailing in India played a significant role in awakening national consciousness. The proposition that nothing should be preached which expressed hatred or contempt for other religions (which almost unanimously give the message of love and unity) was bound to give impetus to the endeavours made for unity. The emphasis on the equality of all religions led to pacification of antagonism and distinctions between various religious creeds. Through their newspapers, periodicals and educational institutions the leaders of the renaissance spread enlightenment among the people and roused them to a new consciousness. All these declarations and activities stimulated the collective consciousness of the indigenous people, which was bound to get a national and patriotic colour.

Preaching of intolerance in the iconoclast campaigns against religious bigotry, and dogma superstitions and the inventions of selfish priesthood were bound to lead to war against falsehood and create a new consciousness. This new awareness assisted the indigenous people to close their ranks against the foreign rulers. The consideration that religious rivalries were beneath the dignity of man, and the endeavours to substitute one religion for the widespread multiplicity of sects and beliefs assisted in creating a feeling that there should be established a national, religious and social unification in India. The attempts of the leaders in convening conferences of representatives of various religions in order to find ways and means to eradicate religious wrangling by discovering common grounds in the religions opened vistas of progress to everyone, to whatever caste or creed he subscribed. "For our motherland a fusion," wrote Swami Vivekananda to a Muslim friend of his in a letter from America dated 10 June 1898, "of the two great systems Hinduism and Islam—Vedanta brain and Islam body—is the only hope. I see in my mind's eye the future perfect India rising out of this chaos and strife, glorious and invincible, with Vedanta brain and Islam body."⁴⁹

49. *Letters of Swami Vivekananda* (Mayavati, Advaita Ashrama), p 390.

Likewise Mahadev Govind Ranade disagreed with those who, inspired by the phase of Hindu revivalism, deprecated all the good that was bestowed on India by Muslim rule. He held that influences and restraints exercised by Muslim rule on Indian society were calculated to do lasting service in the building up of the strength and character of the directions in which the Indian races were most deficient. He added that, far from suffering from decay and corruption the native races accumulated strength by reason of Muslim rule when it was directed by the wise counsel of those Muslim and Hindu statesmen who "sought the weal of the country" by a policy pregnated with tolerance and equality. Since the days of Ashoka, the element of strength born of union was wanting in the old Hindu dynasties who succumbed so easily to the Muslim invaders. After enumerating "a hundred other ways the Mahomedan domination helped to refine the tastes and manners of the Hindus", Ranade pointed out that "more lasting benefits have however accrued by this contact in the higher tone it has given to the religion and thoughts of the people." He concluded:

If the lessons of the past have value, one thing is quite clear, viz, that in this vast country no progress is possible unless both Hindus and Mahomedans join hands together, and are determined to follow the lead of the men who flourished in Akbar's time and were his chief advisers and councillors, and sedulously avoid the mistakes which were committed by his great-grandson Aurangzeb.⁵⁰

It is interesting to remember that, like other leaders of socio-religious reform movements, Ranade was not influenced by the mystic and obscurantist ideas of religion. That is why the future of India, which formed the grand vision of Ranade, was that of a great nation proud of its past, marching on towards a bright future, united firmly in the pursuit of the ideals of equality, fraternity and liberty, purified of social evils and inspired, guided by the feelings of conscience and morality.

50. *Miscellaneous Writings of the late Hon'ble Mr. Justice M.G. Ranade*, published by Mrs. Ramabai Ranade (Bombay, 1915), pp. 219-20, 223-24 & 226.

Thus the leaders of the religious movements in India were endeavouring through historically progressive techniques to create a new outlook which would assist in the process of forming a national unification of the various communities; Hindus, Muslims, Parsis, Sikhs and all the others.

They had the motive of building a sound basis for the solution of common national problems such as the socio-economic growth of the country on the basis of techniques introduced by the phenomenon of capitalism, the acceptance of *de facto* equality between the sexes, the eradication of the obstacles hindering the free evolution of the new generation, the change in the religious system and the dethroning of the Brahmin from the high pedestal sanctifying his monopoly of the culture and his sole intermediation between God and the ordinary human being.

Another remarkable characteristic which played a significant role in awakening the national consciousness was the fight by the renaissance leaders in the rugged spirit of a protestant for the introduction of measures of social amelioration like the abolition of caste based upon birth, abolition of untouchability, the fight against the ban on foreign travel, the campaigns against polytheism and idolatory; the attack on the caste privilege as the monopoly rights of the Brahmin in the sphere of religion, its fight against smothering the old Hindu faith under the whole network of ceremonies, rites, temples and festivals; its combat against the powerful and ignorant but reactionary priesthood. While the mystic reformer Ramakrishna Parmahansa—influenced as he was with religious liberalism—found communion with suffering humanity by praying, “Oh Mother, make me the servants of the Pariah”⁵¹ and swept his house with his own long hair, it was left to his disciple, Swami Vivekananda, to start a vigorous campaign of oratory against the wretchedness and squalor, both moral and material, in which the India of his times was fallen. In one of his powerful and impressive speeches he stated:

What can you expect of a race which for hundreds of years has been busy in discussing such momentous

51. Romain Rolland, *The Life of Ramakrishna*, translated from the original French by Dr. Macolam Smith, (Advaita Ashrama, Mayavati, Almora, 1947), p. 92.

problems as whether we should drink a glass of water with the right hand or the left?...What more degradation can there be than that the greatest minds of a country have been discussing, whether I may touch you or you touch me, and what is the penance for this touching! Shame upon them that such wicked and diabolical customs are allowed.⁵²

Exposing the stagnation in the sphere of religion he stated:

Our religion is the kitchen. [Do you think there is any religion left in India? The paths of knowledge, Devotion, and Yoga—all have gone and now there remains only “The whole world is impure and I alone am pure.”] Our God is the cooking-pot, and our religion is, “don’t touch me, I am holy.”⁵³

A similar emphatic protest came from him against untouchability inflicted upon the shudras:

We do not touch them, we avoid their company. Are we men? Those thousands of Brahmins...what are they doing for the low, down-trodden masses of India? “Don’t touch”, “Don’t touch”, is the only phrase that plays upon their lips!⁵⁴

And he exhorted the people to proclaim openly:

Say—“the ignorant Indian, the poor and destitute Indian, the Brahmin Indian, the patroit Indian, is my brother.”⁵⁵

Growth of Consciousness among Muslims

As already told, one of the pre-requisites of national awakening is the growth of the classes of the intelligentsia and the bourgeoisie. These classes did grow up among the

52. *The Complete Works of Swami Vivekananda* (Advaita Ashrama, Mayavati, Almora, Himalayas, 1932, Fourth edition) Vol. III, pp. 270-71, 294-95.

53. *Letters of Swami Vivekananda*, n. 50, pp. 190 & 253.

54. *Speeches & Writings*, n. 42, pp. 718-19.

55. *Ibid*, p. 701.

Indian Muslims though later than among the Hindus due to certain historical and religious reasons. One of them was the anti-Muslim policy of the British Government, who believed that it was largely the Muslims who revolted against their rule in 1857. This luke-warm attitude led to the creation of a feeling among high-class Muslims that unless they themselves came in the field for the educational and cultural progress of their people nothing tangible would be gained. Secondly, they also believed that the alien regime had been stabilized so firmly in India that it was too powerful to be resisted and too useful to be ignored.

With the inculcation of these feelings in a good number of high-class Muslims there began the phase of Muslim renaissance in India. The beginning was made with the Delhi "Urdu Revival" in the last quarter of the 19th century. The leaders of this revivalist phase produced in the vernacular language the scientific and technical achievements and knowledge of the Western world. The objects pursued by the Delhi "Urdu Revival" were also tried by the Muhammadan Literary Society founded in 1863. At the centre of the Society the upper class Muslims started meeting and discussing the major contemporary social, political and economic problems. They also inculcated some liking for European learning.

But, by far the most important step in bringing a social renaissance among the Muslims was taken by the Aligarh Movement whose main pioneer and organizer, Sir Syed Ahmad Khan, was so dazzled by the dynamics of European civilization during his trip in the 1870's that besides pleading for the adherence of the Muslims to the alien regime, he also started emphasizing the inculcation of the cultural contributions of Europe by the indigenous Muslims. In a letter written to the Scientific Society at Aligarh from London on 15 October, 1869 he stated:

All good things, spiritual and worldly, which should be found in man, have been bestowed by the Almighty in Europe, and especially on England.... The natives of India, high and low, merchants and petty shopkeepers, educated and illiterate, when contrasted with the English in education, manners, up-

rightness, are as like them as a dirty animal is to an able and handsome man.⁵⁶

Gradually the Aligarh Movement permeated the entire life of the growing Muslim middle class. By succeeding in imparting to the Muslim intelligentsia what they were actually in need of, the Aligarh Movement became a landmark in the history of the Muslims. But along with this progressive role, the movement also played a retrogressive role in the growth of Indian nationalism—when it weaned the influential Muslims away from the policy of opposition to the British regime to one of loyalty. Commenting upon this anti-national character of the Aligarh Movement, Iqbal Singh writes:

The Aligarh Movement, it is true, was not altogether sympathetic to the concept of All-India nationalism. Its founder, Sir Saiyed Ahmed Khan, made no secret of his suspicions of, if not active hostility to, the Indian National Congress. The organisation was not loyal enough to the temporal powers for his liking. He had early come to the conclusion that the Muslim community had suffered because it had gone on the wrong side of the Ruling Power and was suspected by its representatives of disloyalty. He wanted his co-religionists to prove by their acts and words that they were loyal to the British, totally and unreservedly loyal.⁵⁷

The opposition of Sir Syed and his followers to the Congress was based on political motives only and did not affect his social contacts with the Hindus. In order to have a clue to his mind, it is essential to mention that Sir Syed was an aristocrat deeply hued in the traditions of medieval feudalism; that on political issues his outlook was medieval. For example like many a medievalist he believed that power and not wealth was fundamental; that the solidier and the

56. Raja Rao & Iqbal Singh, ed., *Changing India*, an anthology of writings (London, George Allen & Unwin, 1939), pp. 50-52. For further study see also Syed Rais Ahmad Jafri (Nadri) ed., *Rare Documents* (Lahore, Mohammed Ali Academy, 1967), pp. 70-88.

57. *The Ardent Pilgrim: An introduction to The Life and Work of Mohammed Iqbal* (Longmans, 1951), pp. 22-23.

administrator were more significant than the merchant and the broker. He was, therefore, solely engrossed in schemes for the rehabilitation, and amelioration of the upper-class Muslims and did not bother about the welfare of the masses. However, a section of the Muslim intelligentsia remained unaffected by Sir Syed's pleadings of loyalty. It came under the spell of the newly emerging nationalist forces and thus nationalism began to permeate the life of quite an influential section of the Muslim intelligentsia. But it could not permeate speedily and steadily the Muslim community as a whole, as it did the Hindu community. One of the reasons for this slow permeation was the basic character of Islam which emphasizes more strongly than any other religious cult, the unity and fraternity of all its followers residing in the various regions of the world. Islam offers stiff resistance to the rise and growth of nationalism which demands loyalty on limited territorial basis.

Conflict of Interests

Indian nationalism also arose as a result of the conflict of interests between the people and the alien regime. While the former wanted the political, economic, cultural and social revolution in India unobstructed by alien rule, the latter were interested, and were actually powerful enough in keeping India politically and economically subject to their policies which were evolved in the metropolitan country to suit their political, strategic and economic needs. "The map of India was being", comments Iqbal Singh, "fast redrawn—at British will and to suit British interests."⁶⁰ The pursuance of those policies by the British regime affected much that was ultimately to alienate the support and goodwill of the people of India. This increasingly integrating conscious struggle of the progressive forces within the new set-up, which cropped up during British rule, against the restrictions imposed by Imperialism, symbolized the growth of Indian nationalism.

Indian nationalism, while admitting the progressive constructive role of the British regime in India, also felt the burden of certain policies pursued by the British which basically retarded the free, healthy political and economic advancement of the Indian people. It imposed

60. Iqbal Singh, n. 6, p. 120.

on India an ineluctable mechanism of exploitation. By changing the traditional land system and ruining the trades of India it disrupted the balanced relationship existing between the two sectors of its economy. Marx observed in 1853:

There cannot, however, remain any doubt but that the misery inflicted by the British on Hindustan is of an essentially different and infinitely more intensive kind than all Hindustan had to suffer before. I do not allude to European despotism, planted upon Asiatic despotism, by the British East India Company, forming a more monstrous combination than any of the divine monsters startling us in the temple of Salsette.... They destroyed it...by levelling all that was great and elevated in the native society. The historic pages of their rule in India report hardly anything beyond that destruction. The work of regeneration hardly transpires through a heap of ruins?⁵⁸

By systematically draining the wealth of India to England after the battle of Plassey in 1757, British rule destroyed the very foundations of production in India. The flow of Indian wealth to the metropolitan country, where it was turned into capital, made the conditions ripe for using the inventions of Hargreaves, Watt, Arkwright, Crompton and many others and brought about the expansion of British manufacture which overwhelmed and finally destroyed ancient Indian industry and converted India into a source of raw materials for British goods. With this destruction of the economic order the loss suffered by every social class can be calculated from the proclamation issued by Bahadur Shah in 1857. It stated:

British Government have monopolised the trade of all the fine and valuable merchandise, leaving only the trade of trifles to the people and even in this they are not allowed their shares of profits, which they secure by means of customs and stamp fees, etc., in money suits.... Besides this, the profits of the traders are taxed with postages, toils, and subscrip-

tions for schools etc.... The Europeans by the introduction of English articles into India have thrown the weavers, the cotton dressers, the carpenters, the blacksmiths and the shoemakers, etc., out of employment and have engrossed their occupations so that every description of native artisan had been reduced to beggary.⁵⁹

There are ample economic data about the economic conditions of the Indian people which can be used as an index to the mood of the millions on the eve of the great revolt in India. The pursuance of these policies by the British led to the upheaval of 1857-58. The distribution of greased cartridges to Indian sepoys was merely a pretext to start the national upsurge.

Despite the diversity of opinions about the character of the 1857 War of Independence among the historians and intellectuals the bulk of the Indian people have now come to regard it an organized struggle for national independence. The hold of the 1857 heritage on national thinking is so great that Dr. R.C. Mazumdar has concluded his study with the following remarks:

The outbreak of 1857 would surely go down in history as the first great and direct challenge to the British rule in India, on an extensive scale. As such it inspired the genuine national movement for the freedom of India from British yoke, which started half a century later. The memory of 1857-58 sustained the later movement, infused courage into the hearts of its fighters, furnished a historical basis for the grim struggle, and gave it a moral stimulus, the value of which it is impossible to exaggerate. The memory of the revolt of 1857, distorted but hallowed

59. S.A. Rizvi and M.L. Bhargava, ed., *Freedom Struggle in Uttar Pradesh*, Source Material containing 21 plates of original documents (Lucknow Publications Bureau, Information Department, Uttar Pradesh, 1957), Vol. I, pp. 455-56 & 458. Proclamation of Bahadur Shah issued on 25 August 1857 was published in the *Delhi Gazette* (1857) and reproduced by *Friends of India* published from Serampore, in its issue of October 1857 under the heading "The Delhi Millennium", reprinted by *National Herald*, Magazine Section (Lucknow), 10 May 1957, p. 1, cols. 1-3.

with sanctity, perhaps did more damage to the cause of the British rule in India than the Revolt itself.⁶⁰

But more than a challenge to the alien domination it was a courageous effort, in fact a war to restore Indian sovereignty, symbolized by crowning the disinherited heir of Akbar, Bahadur Shah, the *Shahenshah* of Hindustan.

The national upsurge also brought out another fact. It destroyed the myth of the invincibility of the British. The people, on the basis of their close association with them, discovered that the British were no supermen. They were as liable to make grave mistakes as anyone. The severe reverses suffered by the British in the Afghan and Sikh Wars influenced the feelings of even the sepoys so much that they began to believe that the British were not unconquerable. This knowledge helped the Indian sepoys to think of the importance of their own preponderance and prowess which had enabled the English to conquer India from Peshawar to Burmah. The people too were fully aware that the Government was entirely dependent on the sepoy army.

The national uprising though subdued, left a great effect on the mind of the people. Their common sufferings during the upsurge broadened their vision which supported the growth of the conception of India as a common "motherland". People from every part of the country started becoming acquainted with each other. As the war spread from Nepal to the territories of the Nizam the participants came in the close contact with the people of various provinces and principalities. The growth of this conception paved the way for the rise of a new type of political leadership. It inspired the struggle for independence in the years to come.

The later half of the nineteenth century following the First War of National Independence of 1857 was characterized by the rapid development of national consciousness. Several forces contributed to this growth. Among these, one of the significant forces was the "differential diffusion of modernism" in Indian economy. While, as already pointed out, some sectors of the indigenous static economy like

60. R.C. Mazumdar, *The Sepoy Mutiny and Revolt of 1857* (Calcutta, 1958), p. 278.

trade, transport and communications, were undergoing revolutionary change, its main sector—agrarian economy—showed no signs of progress. Not only did famines take place, the methods of cultivation remained stereotyped, the desire to improve was frustrated and losses on livestock hampered recovery. But since the population continued to grow and the pressure on the land to increase, the Indian people were exposed to mounting stress, which became acute on a number of occasions.

On the other hand, the entire nation was disarmed. The administration was vested in a bureaucracy which in its gradual development became imperious in its tone and unsympathetic in its attitude. It was alleged to be saturated with the prejudices of autocratic rule. Besides, the first thirteen years of the Queen's administration were marked by a very quick increase in the public debt, involving one layer after another of financial burden upon the people. The costs of curbing the 1857 upsurge, the price of the transfer of the Company's rights to the Crown, every governmental item in London that was remotely related to this country, from the fees of the charwoman in the India Office and the expenses of the ships that sailed from England but did not participate in the hostilities, to the cost of Indian regiments for six months training in England before they sailed—all were charged to the account of the unrepresented ryot. The Sultan of Turkey visited London in 1868 in state, and his official ball was arranged for at the India office and the bill charged to India. A lunatic asylum in Ealing, gifts to members of a Zanzibar Mission, the Consular and diplomatic establishments of Great Britain in China and Persia, part of the permanent expenses of the Mediterranean Fleet and the entire cost of a line of telegraph from England to India had been charged before 1870 to the Indian Treasury. Is it small wonder that the Indian revenues swelled from £ 33 million to £ 52 million a year during the first thirteen years of Crown administration and that deficits accumulated from 1866 to 1870 amounted to £ 11½ million. A debt of £30,000,000 was brought into existence between 1857 and 1860, and steadily added to, while British statesmen achieved reputations for economy and financial skill through judicious manipulation of the Indian account. The costly Delhi Durbar was held in 1877 at a time when a terrible famine was ruining the population in South India. All this justified

the popular saying; "Nero was fiddling while Rome was burning." The situation was further worsened by heavy military budget to maintain the so-called "scientific frontier" on the North-West Frontier of India. At recurring intervals of a few years there also occurred pestilences, particularly in the rural side. In his study *Migration of British Capital*, an English author, L.H. Jenks, has given a comprehensive description of these facts.

In India it was left to Dadabhai Naoroji, the most courageous and outspoken critic of the economic policies of the British Government to expose its misrule. In his famous memorandum *The Moral Poverty of India and Native Thoughts on the Present British Indian Policy* submitted to the Secretary of State for India on 16 November 1880, he pointed out:

When English interests are concerned, their accomplishment is often a foregone conclusion. But India's interests always require long and anxious thought—thought that seldom begins, and when it does begin, seldom ends in any thorough good result.... It is useless to conceal that the old pure and simple faith in the honour and word of the English rulers is much shaken.

In case of former foreign conquests, the invaders either retired with their plunder and booty, or became the rulers of the country. When they only plundered and went back, they made no doubt, great wounds; but India, with her industry, revived and healed the wounds. When the invaders became the rulers of the country, they settled down in it, and whatever was the condition of their rule, according to the character of the sovereign of the day, there was at least no material or moral drain in the country. Whatever the country produced remained in country; whatever wisdom and experience was acquired in her services remained among her own people. With the English the case is peculiar. There are the great wounds of the first wars in the burden of the public debt, and those wounds are kept perpetually open and widening, by draining away the life-blood in a continuous stream. The former rulers

were like butchers hacking here and there, but the English with their scientific scalpel cut on to the very heart, and yet, lo! there is no wound to be seen, and soon the plaster of the high talk of civilization, progress, and what not, covers up the wound! The English rulers stand sentinel at the front door of India, challenging the whole world, that they do and shall protect India against all comers, and themselves carry away by a backdoor the very treasure they stand sentinel to protect.⁶¹

How much closer are these sentiments so prophetically pronounced by an Indian statesman to the feelings reflected in the most memorable 1873 House of Commons speeches of the great eighteenth century English statesman, Edmund Burke, interwoven by immortal passages like "Young men, boys (of English race) almost, govern there (in India) without society and without sympathy for the natives". "They (the Asian conquerors of India) rose or fell with the rise and fall of the territory they lived in. Fathers there deposited the hopes of their posterity; the children there beheld the monuments of their fathers. Here their lot was finally cast"; "There is nothing before the eyes of the natives but an endless, hopeless prospect of new flights of birds of prey and passage, with appetites continually renewing for a food that is continually wasting" or "Every rupee of profit made by an Englishman is lost for ever to India."

The application of such measures, due to which both the rural and urban sides suffered heavily, affected internal trade and its repercussions were felt by the new *bourgeoisie*, bankers and the professional classes like pleaders and advocates. The rural dissatisfaction communicated itself to the politically advanced urban sections who not only gave voice to it but also called upon the regime to introduce changes in its economic policies and administrative techniques.

In the urban centres trade and industry which had a comparatively low status in the economy of the country did make some progress. But they were prevented from becom-

61. Dadabhai Naoroji, *Poverty and Un-British Rule in India*; a collection of his writings and speeches (London, Swan Sonnenschein & Co., 1901), pp. 210-12.

ing a catalytic agent of progress and their development was lop-sided. The British invested capital primarily in the railways and plantations. While the railways were largely used for military deployment and the strengthening of the colonial economy, the plantation industries were mostly monopolized by Europeans who reaped most of the profits. Large-scale industries with the exception of textiles, got scarcely any stimulation. This is testified to by the fact that by the close of the previous century the percentage of people living in the cities of more than one lakh population was only 2.33. In urbanisation India was nearly 75 years behind the USA.⁶²

This discouraging picture of Indian progress symbolized that aspect of British Imperialism which cancelled most of the advantages claimed by its apologists and admirers. This side of the imperialistic medal presented dismal features—economic exploitation, impoverishment of the masses, dwarfing of the moral stature and dignity of the subject people. “Imperialist Britain treated dependent India,” writes Dr Tara Chand, “as a satellite, whose main function was to sweat and labour for the master, to subserve its economy and to enhance the glory and prestige of the Empire.”⁶³ Some years later a western scholar was to testify that “the English are not an assimilating race; their motives of expansion are almost wholly economic.”⁶⁴ The British control provided security to the British *bourgeoisie* in the sphere of export and import and also to their investments in colonial India, both of which carried some elements of exploitation of Indian resources for the benefit of the British.

Beneath this discouraging achievement, there went on growing great discontent among the Indian people. That this growing discontent was ultimately to culminate in violent popular and anti-British revolutions like the Kooka Rebellion and Deccan riots is evident by the famous though voluminous confidential police reports received by Mr. Hume.⁶⁵

62. Tara Chand, n. 9, p. 278. 63. Ibid, p. 474.

64. L.C.A. Knowles, *Economic Development in the Nineteenth Century* (1924), p. 307.

65. For further study see Wedderburn, W., *Allan Octavian Hume*, pp. 80-1.

To avert these rising forces of popular discontent and anti-British sentiments was brought into existence the Indian National Congress in 1885 through the initiative of Mr Hume and under the direct guidance of the aliens. In the words of Hume the foundation of the Congress organization was a "safety-valve" for the escape of great and growing forces of discontent generated by the indifferent attitude of the alien regime. There was devised for the new classes of India a national platform from which to build a New India. The birth of the Congress synchronized with the rise of the phenomenon of nationalism in the shape of a political organization on the Indian political scene.

Whatever might have been the factors responsible for the growth of nationalism in India a share for its rise would surely go the Western educated Indian middle class who, with the assistance of a few English liberals, laid the foundation of the national freedom movement on an all-India basis for the first time in 1885.

Before the national uprising of 1857 there prevailed a feeling among these middle class intellectuals that the virtuous and progressive elements of British imperialism preponderated over the wicked ones. But now the situation had changed. With the introduction of modern elements in the Indian set-up and formation of public opinion the intelligentsia was becoming conscious of the autocratic and exploiting character of foreign imperialism. Moreover, the days were gone when it was looked up to with respect. Now its members—called "a microscopic minority" which represented nobody—were treated with contempt. They demanded not only liberalisation of administration but also a share in power. Such a demand roused suspicions in the circles of the British Government which distrusted them as constituting a probable challenge to British rule. Inevitably, a conflict ensued, which grew into a struggle for power between the rulers and the ruled. The ruled fought their struggle from the Congress platform. This metamorphosis from acquiescence to repudiation, of course, brought about by the

play of some force, showed a clear drift. It clearly indicated that the political initiative began to pass out of the authority of the country's alien rulers.

Even before the foundation of the Indian National Congress the phenomenon of nationalism had begun to take organizational shape in rudimentary form in India. There had been established a number of associations⁶⁶, aimed at securing the interests of Indian "fellow-subjects," and presenting their grievances before the British Parliament. They also attempted at ascertaining and propagating the views of the people as to how Indians could progress in the political and other fields. They also discussed and adopted the means which they should consider proper for their countrymen and for the diffusion of political education among them. In their own humble way they tried to build a common platform of their country's welfare. They can be regarded as the fore-runners of the Congress. Besides, the theatre and the secret revolutionary organizations were actively engaged in Bengal in promoting nationalist aims. While the ultimate objective of national independence was enthusiastically proclaimed in romantic political songs, folk-songs and fables, the biographies of the revolutionary freedom-fighters abroad were translated in vernacular languages. Bengali newspapers like the *Amrita Bazar Patrika* started appearing with sharper tones of criticism against the alien government. Another journal, the *Som Prakash* published a series of articles on the nationalistic background of Italian leaders Mazzini, Garibaldi, Cavour and the Scottish hero, William Wallace. The founding father of Indian nationalism, Surendra Nath Banerja, delivered in 1875 a series of lectures on the Indian resurgence, and on the Sikh history extolling the bravery of the Sikh leaders. The renowned novelist, Bankim used his appreciable genius in composing moving proses which inculcated the patriotic feelings. The *Bengalee* exhorted the country "to cast off its apathy of ages and show something of that earnestness and energy so necessary for building up the nation." It detailed its programme of conducting public meetings in the principal

66. For further study see Dr. Tara Chand, n. 9, pp. 525-27. Also see Michael Edwardes, *British India : 1771-1947* (London, Sidgwick & Jackson, 1967), pp. 276-78.

provincial towns in which Indian questions would be discussed and Indian wants and grievances made known.⁶⁷

Such provincial political activities had paved the way for the creation of political organization which would embrace the whole of the country and bring together into one central organization the several provincial groups and politically advanced persons scattered all over India. Conditions were quite favourable for the founding of a national body to provide proper ventilation to national demands and needs.

The Indian National Congress

Those who assembled at Bombay in 1885 to establish the first political platform were the leaders of English speaking and English taught sections from the upper middle classes of lawyers and merchants, and deriving their ideals of political institutions from English philosophers and statemen. They had grown in size and awareness of their duties towards the motherland. Hardly 28 years had passed since 1857 when a new race of Indians, thrilled by the vision of a new India, met together. They assembled together to deliberate among themselves on the prevailing political and economic conditions in India and to take steps for their amelioration. In their discussions the leaders emphasized the point that there was a general consensus of opinion among the educated people that the then prevailing political condition of the country was in need of vast improvement. The people had well-founded political and economic grievances that required to be redressed and serious disabilities needed removal.

The leaders assembled came from every part of the country. For the first time in the history of India they met on a common platform to achieve a common object, namely, to represent on behalf of their countrymen the grievances from which they suffered, and to give an articulate voice to their aspirations. With all their weaknesses, they threw out a challenge to the British regime. The prevailing conditions assisted them. The alien regime refused to show any inclination towards integration with the Indian people. Their rule was not organic to the Indian set-up. The intellectuals recoiled at what they thought to be political subservience and

67. *The Bengalee*, 12 April, 1879.

their educated notions revolted against the political disabilities imposed by alien domination. Domination acquired by force can be permitted only if it is morally justified. Moral justification rests upon the recognition, consent and goodwill of the ruled. Ignore the will of the ruled and resistance will result.

The intellectuals assembled at the Congress considered themselves to be representing the collective wisdom and ability of a newly emerging politically conscious India. The members of this educated community, though a minority as everywhere, nonetheless, were the mouthpiece of the politically conscious people and exponent of the popular voice. These pioneers of the national movement cherished the hope that under the vivifying patronage of the Congress all the Indian people, those of every caste and creed, would be welded into one inseparable and indissoluble whole for the everlasting benefit of the country. One of the objects of the Congress was "the eradication, by direct friendly personal intercourse, of all possible race or creed prejudices amongst all lovers of our country, and the fuller development and consolidation of ...sentiments of national unity."⁶⁸ Thus in order to build up a true national body the nationalists laboured to generate forces for the unification of the heterogeneous population into a homogeneous mass. A reflection of this sentiment is evident in the following speech delivered by Dadabhai Naoroji in 1893 session of the Congress.

Let us always remember that we are children of our mother country. Indeed, I have never worked in any other spirit than that I am an Indian (cheers) and owe duty to my country and all my countrymen. Whether I am a Hindu, a Muhammadan, a Parsi, a Christian, or of any other creed, I am above all an Indian. Our country is India, our nationality is Indian.⁶⁹

The assemblage of such a Congress was an event of great significance. It manifested the existence of a national plat-

68. *The Indian National Congress*, containing an account of its origin, and growth, full text of the Presidential Address, reprint of the various resolutions, etc. (Madras, G.A. Natesan & Co., 1908), p. 3.

69. Presidential Address by Dadabhai Naoroji delivered at the annual session of the Congress held at Lahore in 1893, *Ibid.*, p. 182.

form composed of various communities eager to bridge their social and religious differences in one common endeavour to uphold the national interests as defined by joint discussion. Hence it was moulded in a cosmopolitan character. This national assembly was, at least in theory, a representative national gathering, a non-official parliament, composed of the representatives of the entire Indian peninsula. This was the first all-India demonstration of nationalist sentiment, and hence it was an important step in the direction of awakening Indian national consciousness. Here the fighters against alien domination had a restrum from which to attack bureaucracy. India felt the throbbings of a new career, For the first time political unity was sponsored not by a central indigenous or foreign regime, but by a group of forward-looking upper class people of the country.

The Congress began its career with very moderate aims and for two decades it had a history of moderate nationalism. Still far away were the days when the same Congress was charged to be the "stormy petrel" of Indian politics banned by the alien rulers, hunted down by foreign soldiers. At every annual session every President emphasized that the desire of the people to be ruled according to the political ideas prevailing in Europe of their days was not incompatible with their deep-entrenched loyalty of the British throne. In the words of Dadabhai Naoroji they were loyal to the "backbone" of theirs to the "light of free English civilization poured" upon them by the British rule.⁷⁰ In their innumerable speeches and addresses what the leaders demanded was only a legitimate share in the political administration of the country, run almost solely by the Anglo-Indian bureaucrats. A reflection of these feelings and demands can be easily witnessed in the Presidential Address delivered by Surendranath Banerjea at the annual Congress session of 1895. He stated:

Let us work... with unwavering loyalty to the British connection... Then will the Congress have fulfilled its mission — justified the hopes of those who founded it, one who worked for it — not, by the suppression of British rule in India, but by broadening its basis, liberalizing its spirit, ennobling its character, and

70. *Ibid.*, pp, 6-8.

placing it upon the unchangeable foundations of a nation's affections. It is not severance that we look forward to—but unification, permanent embodiment, as an integral part of that great Empire which has given the rest of the world the models of free institutions... covered the world with free states. Places, hitherto the chosen abode of barbarism, are now the home of freedom. Wherever floats the flag of England, there free Governments have been established. We appeal to England gradually to change the character of her rule in India, to liberalise it, to shift its foundations, to adopt it to the newly-developed environments of the country and the people, so that, in the fulness of time, India may find its place in the great confederacy of free states. English in their institutions, rejoicing in their permanent and indissoluble union with England, a glory to the mother-country, and an honour to the human race. Then will England have fulfilled her great mission in the East, accomplished her high destiny among nations, repaid the long standing debt which the West owes to the East,⁷¹ and covered herself with imperishable renown and everlasting glory.⁷¹

Hence the upholders of this moderate nationalism cherished the continuation of British rule in India. They were satisfied if they could obtain only representative institutions in a modified form not injurious to the permanency of alien domination. Conceding such a demand by Britain was considered the triumph of British administration in India. Furthermore, they held that it was due to British love for freedom of expression and assembly that they had been able to meet together to deliberate over their common problems—a phenomenon in direct contrast to that of former despotic Indian rulers under whose aegis it was quite unimaginable to hold such national gatherings and to whom to deliberate on the open public platforms on issues of national significance was anathema.

Apart from the demand for the attainment of a system of government similar to that enjoyed by the self-governing people of British Empire through constitutional means and

71. Ibid., pp., 287-91.

participation by them in the rights and responsibilities of the Empire, in their speeches and resolutions from public pulpits the moderate nationalists raised a number of other grievances which needed amelioration. Most prominent and of unfailing interest among these, and which became an annual theme for years to come, were the increase of expenditure incurred on military expeditions to frontiers and the entertaining of foreign guests, which the nationalists believed had disorganized Indian finances.

Another significant problem that continued to draw the attention of the petty-bourgeois nationalists for years to come was the development of commerce and industry. The upholders of the national cause believed that Indian economic interests were subordinated to those of Lancashire; that the village handicrafts were neglected, if not completely ruined; that the Indian sources of earning wealth were heremetically sealed by the perpetuation of alien domination. They charged that the policy of the Government thwarted the interests of Indian bourgeoisie which had become more and more conscious of their permanent requirements. Speaking at the Nagpur Congress in 1891 in a fervent manner Lala Murlidhar, one of the delegates, featured their grievances :

You, it seems are content to join with these accursed monsters in fattening on the heart's blood of your brethren... Look round. What are all these chandeliers and lamps, and European made chairs and tables, and smart clothes and hats, and English coats and bonnets and frocks, and silver-mounted canes, and all the luxurious fittings of your houses, but trophies of India's misery, mementoes of India's starvation! Every rupee you have spent on Europe-made articles is a rupee of which you have robbed your poorer brethren, honest handicraftsman who can now no longer earn a living... Our philanthropists have conjured up the phantam of free trade to drain our granaries. Free trade, fair play between the nations!... What fair play in trade can there be between impoverished India and the bloated capitalist England.⁷²

72. *Report of the Seventh Indian National Congress held at Nagpur on 28-30 December, 1891* (London, British Committee of the Indian National Congress, 1892), p. 21.

Besides the fostering of the indigenous industry and commerce the themes that engaged the attention of those early nationalists were that land revenue should be reduced and salt tax abolished; that sincere endeavours be made by Government officials to avoid famine and poverty; that the universities, the local bodies and the public services should form the source of recruitment for India. They also demanded the reform and expansion of the Legislative Council, the separation of Judicial and Executive functions, simultaneous examinations for the Indian Civil Services to be conducted in India.

But all these moderate demands went unheeded. No satisfactory measure was taken by the alien rulers to fulfil them. Such an apathetic attitude on the part of the British rulers was to impress upon the mind of the people that the alien government, with all paraphernalia of commissions and committees, elaborate minutes and despatches, was not in a mood to bestow concessions on the inhabitants; that it was determined to keep them under perpetual tutelage and rule the land by its periodical grant of titles and honours to Indians and by firmly clinging to the doctrine of *divide-et-imperisa*. There is not a shadow of doubt that a considerable section of the Indian society had come to believe that the ruling authorities were strongly opposed to making the slightest curtailment of the vested interests and privileges of the bureaucracy upon whom the security of *Pax-Britannica* was believed to rely. These moderate nationalists failed to recognize that "behind the pulsating language of European radicalism, so edifying, so stimulating and inspiring, there were layer after layer of unstated mental reservations, if not equivocations... While 'the Lords and Commons' whom a kindly 'providence' had appointed as guardians of Indian destiny might mouth in loud moral tones the principle of liberty as the basis of all civilized government, they did not automatically extend that definition to the affairs of the lesser breed within the law; that in fact, the concept of freedom whether of the individual or the press, as they interpreted it, was strictly qualified and valid only within very narrow social, not to mention, racial and geographical frontiers."⁷³

These liberal nationalists also failed to comprehend the true nature of the existing relationship between the

ruler and the ruled. They could visualize India as not a free country but an imperial colony of British capitalism. This being so, it was impossible for Britain to permit the free economic growth of India, which was to be subordinated to meet the growing needs of British capital; that it was impossible for the alien regime to part with power or to agree to the introduction of administrative reforms of far-reaching character; that the problem was not ethical but was a reflection of the divergent political and economic interests.

This clash of interests was bound not only to antagonize the nationalists, but to drive home the scathing criticism of British imperialism blocking their way to progress. To them all talk of freedom and democracy appeared hollow and hypocritical; all orations on equality and progress a sham and pretence. To them the British Imperial system appeared to be democratic at home but imperialist and autocratic abroad. Surendranath Banerjea held the system responsible for turning his people "outlanders in the land of our birth, worse than helots in the British Colonies." He charged it not to be sedulous in opening up to his countrymen the possibilities of their greatness. In his view it was wrong to believe that British imperialism implied the existence of some sort of a closer federation between English-speaking subjects of the Crown, because Indians were not admitted into the "inner sanctuary of freedom." They were privileged only to serve and admire from a distance.⁷⁴

Political disillusionment of the moderate nationalists was further accentuated by the stiff socio-political measures adopted by Lord Curzon during the tenure of his Viceroyalty. His infringement of the civil powers of the Calcutta Corporation; Official Secrets Act, officialization of the Universities which made the inculcation of modern education a costly affair; expensive military expeditions across the Himalayas in Tibet, and finally the promulgation of the Act bifurcating Bengal into two separate administrative zones, ended in breaking the patience and arousing the passion of the Congress leaders. Their feelings were reflected in the Presidential Address of Mr. Gokhale delivered at the annual session of the Indian National Congress held in 1905;

74. *The Indian National Congress*, n. 70, pp. 729-31.

Gentlemen... the Viceroyalty of Lord Curzon has come to a close... For a parallel to such an administration, we must, I think, go back to the times of Aurangzeb in the history of our country. There we find the same attempt at a rule excessively centralized and intensely personal, the same strenuous purpose, the same overpowering consciousness of 'duty,... the same persistence in a policy of distrust and repression, resulting in bitter exasperation all round.⁷⁵

But despite this denunciation of the imperial political system the Moderates did not think of breaking their link with Britain. They still wishfully believed that common sense would prevail in Britain to grant Indians the rights of equal citizenship with free political institutions within the imperial confederation of the self-governing states, of which England was the 'august mother'. They disfavoured the idea of radical revolutionary change. They believed in the so-called orderly progress and subscribed to the philosophy of slow evolution. Resort to radical methods they believed, was against their fundamental assumptions. Passive resistance, including the non-payment of taxes to redress their grievances was, in their view, illegal. They pleaded for the gradual reconstruction of the 'venerated' system which gave 'law and order' to India. The spice of all these speeches was their avowal of loyalty to the British regime. They believed, though in vain, that the new imperialism of Britain was a passing phase which would be discontinued by the return of common sense to the rulers. Hence there was no need of raising any basic claim for self-government by the people. They looked upon the ruler as their close ally. They considered themselves as the natural interpreters of the government to the people and of the people to the government. Instead of British rule, the backwardness of the countrymen, the conspicuous absence of modernization of the country in all the phases, the retrogressive forces of ignorance and illiteracy along with the administrative shortsightedness of the Anglo-Indian bureaucracy were their main enemy. Hence they organized various associations and conferences for social amelioration, enlightenment, and imparting education and modernization in order to eradicate backward-

75. *Ibid.*, pp. 790-93.

ness and ignorance in the country. Mr. R.P. Dutt characterizes this twofold character of Indian nationalists as "on one hand, the strand of cooperation with imperialism against the 'menace' of the mass movement; on the other hand, the strand of leadership of the masses in the national struggle". This twofold character reflected the vacillating role of the Indian bourgeoisie, at once in conflict with the British bourgeoisie and desiring to lead the Indian people, yet fearing that too speedy advance might result in destroying its privileges along with those of the alien rulers.⁷⁶

Emergence of Militant Nationalist Leadership

The vacillating role of the Moderates was bound to introduce a change in the character of the Indian nationalist movement. And it did occur in the beginning of the last decade of the nineteenth century. Although the liberal elements still maintained their leadership in the Indian National Congress, and in fact they continued to maintain their predominance till World War I, the phase of liberalism deriving inspiration from the West came to be seriously challenged. A new and younger generation was arising, a generation that had no faith in the dynamics of the political leaders and the 'inevitability of gradualness' emphasized by them. It was becoming thoroughly disgusted with the staid procedure of the Congress. Its members were also critical of the deferential and supplicatory attitude of the national body and they agitated for more dynamic techniques of political struggle. One of them, Aurobindo Ghosh, exposed the drawbacks of the techniques pursued so far by the Congress in a series of articles published in the *Indu Prakash* in 1893 under the title "New Lamps for Old". He characterized the enlargement of the Legislative Councils and simultaneous examinations, as "conjuring tricks", derided the talk about "the blessings of British rule, and the inscrutable providence which has laid us in the material...bosom of just and benevolent England" and warned "the walls of the Anglo-Indian Jericho stand yet without a breach and the dark spectre of penury draws her robe over the land in greater volume and with an ampler sweep."⁷⁷

76. R.P. Dutt, *India Today and Tomorrow* (Delhi, 1955), pp. 118-29, 121.

77. Haridas and Uma Mukherjee, *Sri Aurobindo's Political Thought* (Calcutta), pp. 67-8.

Ghosh was thoroughly disappointed with the Congress. He nicknamed it "a middle class organ, selfish and disingenuous in its public action and hollow in its professions of a large and disinterested patriotism...to play with baubles...not to deal with grave questions. It has made no attempt to be a popular body empowered by the fiat of the Indian people. The great mass of the people have not been appreciably touched. The proletariat is the real key of the situation. The right and fruitful policy is to awaken and organise the entire power of the country and thus multiply infinitely, the volume and significance (of the common man)." ⁷⁸

Inspired by such powerful writings the younger people started looking with bitterness, anger and scorn not only upon English rule but also upon their elders' Western mode of behaviour. To them the process of assimilation with the West appeared as a betrayal of the entire 'glorious' heritage of India. The socio-religious movements founded by eminent personalities like Swami Dayanand, Ramakrishna Parmahansa and Vivekananda awakened pride in the glorious past and unique mission of the Indian civilization and culture, and institutions of ancient days. They called upon the educated people to study the ancient Indian spiritual thought which, in their opinion, stood far superior in comparison to the materialism imparted by modern Europe. They believed that being dazzled by the modern West the educated people forgot the great traditions of their ancient forefathers in the days when India was at the zenith of her glory — the traditions built up by the great sages of her own land and running for centuries through her veins; traditions that disclose unsurpassed valour, 'superhuman' genius and 'supreme' spirituality. On the other hand they were steeped in luxuries brought from the West such as drink, costly food served in the Western manner, new modes of conveyance, new fashions and the licence of thought, taste and character. But by imitating alien ideas, they stated, never has there been achieved greatness. They enquired "does the ass in the lion's skin become the lion?" To strengthen their logic and challenge the imitation of the West they appeared to be quoting Vivekananda:

Oh India! this is your terrible danger. The spell of imitating the West in getting such a stronghold upon

you that what is good or what is bad, is no longer decided by reason, judgement, discrimination or reference to the *Shastras*. Whatever ideas, whatever manners the whitemen praise or like, are good; whatever things they dislike or censure are bad! Alas! What can be a more tangible proof of foolishness than this?... Oh India! with this slander of others, with this base imitation of others, with this dependence on others, this slavish weakness, this vile detestable cruelty—wouldst thou with these provisions only scale the highest pinnacle of civilization and greatness? Wouldst thou attain, by means of thy disgraceful cowardice, that freedom deserved only by the brave and the heroic? ⁷⁹

The social movement of the *Arya Samaj* sought to bring a new life to India and the Hindu community by emphasizing national revival. As a means to this objective this institution suggested that the people should turn back to the Sanskrit literature. Though this religious form of the national movement was conditioned by its very immaturity, nevertheless the socio-religious movements like the *Samaj* made a historically progressive contribution, in spite of their limited rational form. They reawakened the India of antiquity.

The rise of this new spirit led to the raising of slogans like "Back to the Vedas" and "Aryasthan for Aryans." The believers of this new orientation "were all for storm and assault...The ancient gods were called upon once more and entreated to drive out the alien powers which were sapping India's very morrow...People were no longer content with the speeches and protests of the older generation, they demanded deeds." ⁸⁰ They were also inspired by the writings of Hem Chandra Bandopadhyaya who in his epic poem *Asa Kanan* sang of "the East radiant with the golden light" and of "Mother India once more sitting upon her throne, her face beaming with a fresh smile of primitive vigour...In joy, once more, the sons of India played on their lyre, and in joy,

79. *Speeches and writings of Swami Vivekananda*, n. 18, 42 pp. 698-70.

80. Comment by Hans Kohn, *A History of Nationalism in the East* (London), 1929, pp. 371-72.

again, they began to tread the earth with the roar of trumpets." A no less significant contribution in the same direction was the appearance of the *Badgdarshan*. In the words of its editor Bankim Chandra Chatterji the object of the journal was "to disanglicize ourselves...and to speak to the masses in the language which they understand." ⁸¹

Though Bal Gangadhar Tilak never advocated openly the use of violent means to get rid of the alien, he was the central figure of the new movement emphasizing Hindu revivalism backed by militant means. He was the pioneer of this new nationalism. He was a great and strong-willed leader who stood openly in favour of a clean break with the traditional attitude of conciliation. He opposed assimilation with Europe, which he considered to be merely a superficial patchwork. Imitation of the West, in his view, was a sign of spiritual bankruptcy and moral degradation of Indians. He detested those people who could equal the aliens in drinking but could never aspire to their place and position in the administration of the country and to whom everything Indian appeared to be odious. Even Europe, he believed, was full of vices and evils. He also emphasized that the greatest danger for an enslaved country was to abuse everything indigenous and praise everything foreign. He sought to prove the superiority of the Vedas over the Western religious ideas and the philosophy enunciated by the thinkers of Christianity. Therefore, he believed that Hinduism could be a powerful element in regenerating the national consciousness. He and his adherents lamented the feeling of rootlessness displayed by the Western-educated generations in the affairs of religion. He endeavoured to awaken his countrymen to a sense of self-respect, self-discipline and self-dependence and create a feeling of nationhood, in order to put political pressure on his opponents adhering to an attitude of compromise with the alien rulers. He believed that unless people's regard for their own history, culture and religion was restored, all high talk of political and social liberation would prove futile and idle. He appealed to the educated and politically mature sections of Indian society to assist in the resurrection of Hindu festivals like

W. Theodore de Bary, Stephen Hay, R. Weilbert A. Yarrow, *Sources of Indian Tradition*, p. 709.

the Ganapati festival and their exploitation for higher political purposes. The organization of such religious activities, we believed, would be conducive to leading the masses in the directions of patriotic endeavour. He emphasized the importance of these Hindu festivals by pointing out that similar institutions existed in Greece and Rome which had played a remarkable role in unifying and awakening national consciousness in the people. At the Olympian and Pythian festivals organized in Greece and the Circus in Rome were gathered poets, scholars, warriors, statesmen and saints who displayed their talents in learned debates and sports and reciting their composition. Though the only award to be won was a crown of wild olive, millions came from all over Greece to participate in the games. And all met in friendly contest in honour of their respective gods. The fine arts were cultivated and promoted in the gatherings of the Pythian fair. Before the advent of the crusade era the Christians celebrated the anniversary of Jesus Christ by honouring and rewarding the persons engaged in philanthropic and warrior-like activities. Similarly the Tara fairs and assemblages in Ireland played a no less significant role in infusing the national spirit. And no less significant from the same point of view were the *Yajnas* and *Satras* in ancient pre-epic India as also the meeting of *Warkaris* at places like Alandi and Pandharpur.

With these convictions Tilak and his followers started organizing the *Sarvajanik* Ganapati festival all over Maharashtra. The festival was organized for a duration of ten days during which lectures, *kirtans*, plays etc. were arranged; *melas* or fairs were held, street parades were conducted with songs and declarations, and the young men were trained in the art of fencing, stick-playing and other physical exercises.

With their organizing ability and ingenuity Tilak and his followers transformed the Ganesh festival into a national movement for the intellectual, spiritual, cultural and artistic uplift of the masses. "Tilak could not have devised a more popular move than when he set", comments Sir Valentine Chirol, "himself to organize annual festivals in honour of Ganesh, known as Ganapati celebrations...These festivals gave occasion for theatrical performances and religious

songs while the legends of Hindu mythology, were skilfully exploited to stir up hatred of the 'foreigners'." ⁸²

Tilak contributed articles regularly in *Kesari* and *Mahratta* calling on the Indian intelligentsia to participate in the ceremonies of the festival. He exhorted them to utilize the occasion by mixing with the people to spread the gospel of *Swaraj*. He thought that a ten-day public festival would provide a good occasion for an anti-British propaganda. He contended that the educated people could easily here do the work that could never be done by the Congress. By converting these fairs into huge mass meetings political agitation would spread in the villages in order to enlighten the people about the misrule of the alien government.

This spirit of Hindu revivalism which revived pride not only in Indian philosophy, literature, art but also in the great heroic deeds of the ancient warriors, was noticed also in Bengali intelligentsia. The growing aversion to Western ideals was stigmatized by these people as the inculcation of a materialistic outlook which was very much an anathema to Indian spiritualism. In their orations and pledges from public pulpits the revivalists expressed their preference and proclaimed openly that they would discard the idol from abroad, and worship even an insignificant material reared at home. The practical manifestation of this outlook was reflected as early as 1867 when persons of social standing like Rajnarain Bose, Nabagopal Mitra and several members of the renowned Tagore family started taking the initiative in organizing the *Hindu Mela* and such other many religious organizations and physical culture centres. In his *Reminiscences*, Rabindra Nath Tagore gives a vivid picture of the activities of the *Hindu Mela*. ⁸³

Resuming the study of Tilak's revivalist activities, besides organizing the Ganesh festival, he diverted his energies to channelling the vigour of the people in matters of national significance. Like Thomas Carlyle and Emerson he thought

82. Valentine Chirol, *Indian Unrest* (London, 1910), p. 44.

83. Rabindra Nath Tagore, *Reminiscences* (London, 11th edition, 1964), p. 140.

that the "heroes" of the universe are the builders of the nation and the makers of history. It is their noble deeds which inspire a layman, satiate his hunger of ideals to aim at, and uplift his moral stature. He strongly felt that a nation could only survive and attain prosperity if it could produce an unbroken chain of renowned personalities to serve and inspire it. When it ceased to produce great men, the nation entered the phase of decay and disappeared into oblivion. All these beliefs convinced him to arrive at the conclusion that the people must be given a hero to worship—someone, who would inspire them to rediscover their dynamic, self-esteem and self-respect, in the absence of which they could never be exhorted to engage themselves in the great endeavour of national liberation. He elucidated his stand in *Mahratta* dated 24 June 1906, "Hero-worship is a feeling deeply implanted in human nature; and our political aspirations need all the strength which the worship of a Swadeshi hero is likely to inspire into our minds." ⁸⁴

So he decided to organize the annual festival round the personality of Shivaji and thus generate a new fervour by merging into a single whole the forces of nationalism and patriotism. To inspire the people he wrote praiseworthy articles on Shivaji. ⁸⁵

These festivals were the centre of Tilak's earlier political work from 1893 to 1906—a period during which he engaged in directing all his energies to re-awakening in his people a sense of their past greatness and thus exhorting them for a perpetual struggle against alien domination.

By nature and temperament Tilak was never an anti-Muslim and the entire idea of celebrating the Shivaji festival was not to alienate or even to irritate the Mohammedans. He strongly believed that with the change of time the Mohammedans and Hindus were in the same boat as far as the political condition was concerned. But the very mention of the name of Shivaji, who had fought

84. *Bal Gangadhar Tilak: His Writings and Speeches* (Madras, Ganesh & Co., 1919), p. 48.

85. *Ibid.*, pp. 48-50.

against the Mughal Emperor Aurangzeb, was bound to have an adverse effect on the minds of the Muslims, especially when the issue was studied in the light of the Poona communal riots. Instead of interpreting the deeds of Shivaji in the modern light in order to exploit his name for future political gains, the politically unconscious and illiterate Muslim was bound to read the proceedings of Shivaji festival in communal terms. This was an opportunity for the alien regime of colouring Tilak's endeavours for national independence as a deliberate attempt to foster communal animosity and raise a bogey of separate nationhood. Simultaneously the Anglo-Indian press in India lost no time in labelling the festival celebration as deliberate attempt on Tilak's part to stir up the Hindus against the Muslims.

Although in search of self-confidence and for ideological weapons against the alien rulers the nationalist movement led by Tilak turned to ancient Hindu traditions and religious philosophies, this very nationalistic Hindu revivalism was bound, though unconsciously, to generate the spirit of separateness. It actually drew the exclusiveness of the Hindus further inwards and to make it so subjective as to become almost ignorant of the presence of non-Hindus. It provided a clue to the Muslim minority to interpret the entire struggle as a struggle for the benefit of the major community of Hindus. Thus Hindu religious revivalism was simultaneously an asset and a liability to the growth of Indian nationalism. This measure cut across the national lines, compartmentalizing Indian society into distinctive fragments which ultimately led to the growing sense of separateness on the part of Hindus and Muslims. Nationalism which had already suffered a heavy loss with the defection of Sir Ahmed, to be followed by the foundation of the Muslim League, received a further setback.

It is true that the new-found pride in the antiquity of India had given middle class intellectuals a sense of self-assurance and dignity and they discovered in the country's traditions some of great concepts of life which provided them with an anchor to rely on against the onslaught of the aggressive trends on Western civilization. It should, however, not be forgotten that, unfortunately, not all of

antiquity was equally valuable. Which part of it deserved to be discarded and which to be valued and how to evolve modes of behaviour out of a synthesis of tradition and contemporariness were issues for which no readymade solution was available.

Tilak's policy of making a clean break with the policy of conciliation with alien domination pursued by the moderate nationalists, and of launching a struggle for liberation with the slogan of *Swaraj* was an advance over the past. But as he did not—could not in the existing stage of social development—look up to the masses as the greatest factor in his movement, he did not think over the organization of proletariat and peasantry on the basis of their social, economic, and political struggle for liberation. That is why on his exile to Mandalay for six years no powerful protest movement could be organized.

At about this time there was another personality actively engaged in the social amelioration of the masses. This was Swami Vivekananda. Above everything else, the real manifestation of his *Karma Yoga*, which distinguished him from all other leaders of Renaissance of the period under study, was his launching of a staunch campaign against the poverty of India. The misery of the destitute left an everlasting impact on his mind. The appalling poverty of the down-trodden Indian masses disturbed him :

...Think how much you do, my brothers, for your poor fellow-countrymen at whose expense you have got your education, and by grinding whose face you have to maintain your position...Oh, how my heart ached to think of what we think of the poor, the low in India. The poor, the low, the sinner in India have no friends, no help—they can not rise, try however they may. They sink lower and lower everyday, they feel the blow, showered upon them by a cruel society, and they do not know whence the blow comes... Him I call a Mahataman, whose heart bleeds for the poor, otherwise he is a Durataman... So long as the millions live in hunger and ignorance, I hold everyone

a traitor, who having been educated at their expense, pays not the least heed to them.⁸⁶

He, therefore, believed that the removal of poverty from India was the task of every man of the new generation. He concluded that the poverty-stricken countrymen could never be brought out of the morass of degradation and alien domination unless everybody in the country worked hard. To achieve this objective all the resources at the country's command were to be tapped and everybody would have to put in his share. Hence he exhorted the new generation to devote their life for eradicating the poverty of the country.⁸⁷

But the tragedy of his whole campaign lay in the fact that he tried to ameliorate the socio-economic conditions of the masses through obsolete and obscurantist means. He urged the social workers of the Ramakrishna Mission to keep these motto before them. "Elevation of the masses without injuring the religion", "Glory unto the Lord", "The Lord is our General", "Fortified with eternal faith in the Lord, fired with the zeal of holiness, March on". He wanted to elevate the masses to equality through slowly-moving evolutionary and not revolutionary means. He behaved like the utopian socialists of Europe. He had no sense of historical evolution. He did not know the dialects of history and its class relationships. In fact by infusing some social elements in an atmosphere otherwise fairly static, he wanted an escape from the reality that bread has to be won and that charity does not bring socialism. It took some time for him to become thoroughly disgusted and disappointed with the bourgeois philanthropy with the apathetic attitude of the rich Indians towards the discomfiture and pitiable plight of the indigenous poor and destitutes. He felt that these wealthy men were never haunted with the stark poverty and misery of the people. They remained indifferent towards the consensus of improving the lot of the poverty-stricken countrymen. None of them ever appeared to him to dedicate his wealth, power and life to the amelioration of the unhappy masses. He

86. *Speeches and Writings of Swami Vivekananda* n. 18, 42, pp. 81, 714-15 & 720.

87. For further study see *Ibid.*, pp. 717-18, 719 & 721.

became firmly convinced that all talk of morality and decency by the bourgeoisie and feudal lords was hypocritical and ambiguous unless they dedicated their lives, both mentally and physically, to eradicate the degradation and sufferings of the poor people. Instead of leading a simple, austere and sincere life dedicated to the cause of building a new India he found them engaged in luxury and exploitation. He could not bear the scenes of greed which he witnessed in the behaviour of the rich circles. This was a great eye-opener to him and in utter disillusionment he wrote :

Their (rich men's) eyes see nothing beyond their little horizon of a few yards—the routine work, eating, drinking, earning and begetting, following each other in mathematical precision. They know nothing beyond happy little souls. Their sleep is never disturbed. Their nice little brown studies of lives never rudely shocked by the wail of woe, of misery, of degradation and poverty that has filled the Indian atmosphere—the result of centuries of oppression... They are standing on the neck of the poor... They little dream of the ages of tyranny, mental moral and physical, that has reduced the image of God to a mere breast of burden; the emblem of the Divine Mother to a slave to bear children, and life itself as cures.⁸⁸

But all his writings went unheeded by the rich. They were unable to cultivate a philanthropic outlook and a spirit of patriotism in the upper classes. And in utter disappointment he hurled impeachment against them and wished their disappearance from the Indian scene, in language more radical than perhaps ever used by any extremist type of radical :

However much you may parade your descent from Aryan ancestors and sing the glories of ancient India days and nights, and however much you may

88. *Speeches and Writings of Swami Vivekananda* (Madras, Seventh edition), pp. 716 & 721.

be strutting in the pride of your birth, you, the upper classes of India,—do you think you are alive? You are all mummies ten thousand years old... It is you who are the real “walking corpses”. Your houses, your furniture look like museum specimens, how lifeless and antiquated they are... In this world of Maya, you are... the real mirage in the desert ! You represent the past tense... That one still seems to see you at the present moment, is nothing but a nightmare brought on by indigestion. You are the void, the unsubstantial nonentities of the future. Denizens of the Dream land... Fleshless and bloodless skeletons of the dead body of Past India that you are,—Why do you not quickly reduce yourselves into dust and disappear in the air?... You merge yourself in the void and disappear and let New India arise in your place... Throw those treasure chests of yours and those jewelled rings among them,—as soon as you can, and you—vanish into air, and be seen no more... No sooner will you disappear than you will hear the inaugural shout of Renaissance India—ringing with the voice of a million thunders and reverberating throughout the Universe.⁸⁹

He drew the new image of the future India of his vision in the following piece :

Let new India arise—out of the peasant's cottage holding, the plough, out of the huts of fisherman, the cobbler and the sweeper. Let her spring from the grocer's shop, from beside the oven of the fruiter-seller. Let her emanate from the factory, from the marts and from the markets.⁹⁰

The expression of these sentiments on the building up of a strong and dynamic nation in his vigorous public orations might have tremendously influenced the poor classes (who, in the absence of their own organized political movements,

89. Ibid., pp. 538-40.

90. Ibid., pp. 539 & 711.

were engaged in the spasmodic, sectarian, futile endeavours at liberating themselves from the exploitation imposed by the upper classes). It should, however, not be forgotten that he was not in favour of political agitation. Here was the Holy Marx of India, vigorously preaching the gospel of socialism,⁹¹ though not scientific as invented by Karl Marx and championing the cause of the underdog, even before the rise of the leftist forces in India. His speeches and writings were like balm to the downtrodden and destitute. Deriving inspiration from the past and fully proud of his Indian heritage he was yet to some extent modern in his—dealings with worldly problems. He was a sort of bridge between the antiquity of India and the present. Full of dynamism and fiery vigour his personality was imbued with a great passion to reorientate India. Unfortunately he expired at the very young age of 39, leaving it for posterity to build the India of his vision. Due to limited resources he could carry out his work of national reconstruction on a limited scale.

91. In a letter dated 1 November 1896 addressed to Miss Marry Hale, Vivekananda wrote from London: "I am a socialist not because I think it is perfect system, but half a loaf is better than no bread. The other systems have been tried and found wanting. Let this one be tried:" *"Complete Works of Swami Vivekananda* (Almora, 1956, sixth ed.), vol. VI, p. 381.

IMPERIALISM AND ITS RECORD

A—Imperial Institutions

Bad rulers serve a useful purpose in the evolution of nations. They stir up the sleeping lion from his torpor; they stimulate public spirit and foster national unity... Bureaucracy is always unequal to a new situation or to an unexpected development. So long as things go on in the normal groove, bureaucracy, deriving its light and leading from precedent and from ancient and dust-laden files, feels happy and confident. But when the clouds appear on the horizon and when there is the ominous pressage of stormy weather ahead, the bureaucratic mind feels restive! the files afford no guidance the bureaucrat is disrurbed; he loses his equanimity; his uneasiness slides into resentment; and, imagining dangers where there are none he adopts heroic measures, which engender the very troubles that wiser and more pacific counsels would have averted.

[Surendra Nath Banerjea, 'A Nation in Making' (London, Oxford University Press, 1926), pp. 195 & 231.]

Centralized Structure

The emergence of the British as the paramount power in India led to a big political transformation. In order to stabilize and preserve the imperial system the British Government introduced a number of political, economic and military institutions in India. Among these the most

prominent were the army, the executive, the judiciary, the civil service, the legislative assemblies and the railways. All functioned on an all-India level, and most possessed a centralized structure. All the higher posts in these institutions were practically reserved for the people of alien, especially British origin. But the clerical and superintending staff of these various departments was recruited from among the Indians. The enrolment of Indians in these institutions from all over the country brought in people from the various castes, creeds and regions. The intermingling of these people under the centralized structure of their respective institutions led to the growth of a sense of national unity in them.

However, the centralized structure of these institutions was motivated by the consideration of British interests predominantly. Along with safeguarding the stability of the British empire in India the Government of India was equally interested in keeping the preponderance of Europeans over the Indians as well as having indigenous elements divided.

Indian Army

The reorganization of the army, undertaken after the national upsurge of 1857, clearly demonstrated the fact that the British regime based its policies on the principle of distrust of Indians and relied upon the preponderant force of the army to overcome all dangers to British rule.

Before 1857, the Indian Army consisted of two sections—European and Indian. The European section was composed of the Queen's regiments lent for service in India and the European regiments recruited in India. In 1856, the Indian Army was predominantly Indian; for every European soldier there were from 7 to 9 Indians.¹ The 1857 rebellion, in which

1. The estimates of the strength of men belonging to all arms vary. According to the *Army Book of the British Empire* compiled by Lt. General Goodenough and Lt. Colonel Baltun the number of European was 38,000 and of Indian 3,48,000. M. Ruthnaswamy's figures were 45,422 Europeans and 3,11,374 Indians. [*Some Influences that made the British Administrative System*, p. 127.] According to the calculation of Melville, the Military Secretary, the strength in 1857, was 2,77,745, made up of 45,521 Europeans and

the Bengal units, largely recruited from the upper castes—the Rajputs and Brahmans of Oudh—played a prominent role, was taken by Government as a serious warning of the unsuitable nature of the military organization. A commission under General Peel was appointed to recommend changes. Its report was published in 1859 and by 1862 most of its recommendations were implemented and the Indian Army was reconstituted.

The principle on which the reorganization was affected, was the maintenance of the preponderance of the European elements in order to minimize the threat from the Indians. The first change was in the proportion of the two; ² the new proportion recommended was one British to two Indians in the Bengal units and two British to five Indian soldiers in the Madras and Bombay units. In absolute terms, there were 65,000 Europeans and 1,40,000 Indians. Subsequently, in 1885, the numbers were increased to 73,500 Europeans and 1,54,000 Indians, as a result of the Russian menace. In 1893, the formula adopted was two British to five Indians for the entire army. This proportion was maintained throughout the years preceding the World War I.

The sanctioned establishment of the army in India for 1907-1908 and its actual strength on April 1, 1908 were as follows: ³

| | Sanctioned Strength | Actual Strength |
|--------------------------------------|------------------------|--------------------|
| British troops | 74,405 | 73,749 |
| Indian troops | 158,062 | 149,950 |
| British Officers of Indian troops | 2,844 | 2,726 |
| Staff Officer, etc. (British) | 861 | 1,091 |
| Total, 1907-1908 | 236,172 | 227,714 |
| 1906-1907 | 236,339 | 228,434 |

2,32,224 Indians. [*Peel Commission Report on Indian Army Organization*, Appendix II, p. 21]

2. In 1856, the strength of the Indian Army stood at 39,375, Europeans and 2,14,985 Indians. In 1878, it consisted of 6,002 British Officers, 60,341 British and 1,23,254 Indian soldiers. [*Report of Army Commission* (1879), paras 11 & 16.]
3. *Moral and Material Progress and Condition in India during the year 1907-1908* (London, 1908), p. 132

During 1907-1908 as in the previous year, four battalions of Indian infantry, not reckoned as part of the Indian establishment were employed in the colonies, and two battalions from the Indian establishment were absent in China. ⁴

The sanctioned establishment of the Indian army reserve was 35,736, and its actual strength on 1 April 1908 was 34,846, as against 32,944 on 1 April 1907. ⁵

The number of volunteers in the whole of India on 1 April 1908 was as under: ⁶

| | 1907 | 1908 |
|-------------------|--------|--------|
| Enrolled strength | 33,606 | 34,962 |
| Efficients | 31,556 | 33,348 |
| Reservists | 1,747 | 2,086 |

In order to control the larger number of Indian soldiers every attempt was made to create an inferiority complex in their mind. Rarely there was any patriotic-minded Indian whose feelings would not have been exposed to indignation and bitterness when early in the year 1904 the Commander-in-Chief in India, General Kitchener addressed to the Indian Army sustaining British Imperialism the following memorandum:

Without a British officer at hand to guide them our native troops may become confused and helpless or what they themselves would term "ghabrao".⁷

4. Ibid.

5. Ibid.

6. Ibid.

7. *Moral and Material Progress and Condition in India during the year 1904-1905* (London, 1905), p. 194.

Likewise, to humiliate Indians Lord Curzon, in the course of his address given at the Royal Societies' club in London on 7 November 1898, had remarked, "when it is said that we hold India by the sword, be it remembered that sword is two-thirds forged of Indian metal, and that in reality we defend her frontiers... by the aid of her own sons. Those men who fought so bravely for us in the frontier campaigns, laid

Most probably it were such speeches which produced Ras Bihari Bose and other Ghadriles. These people felt perhaps insulted by reading such speeches. In due course of time they took the pledge to overthrow the Imperialist system by secretly conspiring to take the command of Indian regiments in 1915 in various cantonment areas.

The second change introduced while implementing the Peel recommendations was to combine the wings of the European army (the troops of the line and the local troops) and to make the entire European force part of the British Army.

A third change was to exclude the Indian element from the arsenals and artillery, an exception being made for such stations as were peculiarly detrimental to the health of the aliens. Thus, the striking power of the Europeans was enormously enhanced and that of the Indians proportionately reduced. Some difference in the training of the two sides, of the disadvantage of the Indian soldier, was also effected. The object was to reduce the status of the Indian part of the army from that of the principal to that of secondary.

A more significant and sinister change took place in the technique of recruitment and organization of regiments. The events of 1857 had confirmed the suspicion of the British and warned them against trusting the people of India. Although there were still some military officers who, like Major General Hancock, believed that the policy of trust was still the best, an overwhelming body of opinion was of the opposite view. Major-General Tucker, in a note submitted to the Peel Commission, explained their point of view. He took it for granted that "in India we have to maintain our supremacy by force of arms and conquest over various races and nationalities," and argued, "it is opposed, therefore, to all experience and to common sense to suppose that ever under any circumstances the Natives in their inmost hearts can become reconciled to our rule as a class." He

down their lives for us, fighting in some cases against men of their own race, religions, family." [*Lord Curzon in India: his speeches* (London, 1906), p. 12.]

also added, "When we have civilised and nationalised India, we shall have to withdraw; and until then we must remain to a certain extent on the insecure footing of which we have so recently experienced so sad a specimen." According to him, the situation "speaks forcibly; or the strong necessity which exists for so dividing and separating into distinct bodies the different nationalities or castes the rulers in our Eastern dominions may deem it safe and expedient to entertain in our armies, so as to render them as little dangerous as possible." ⁸ The Peel Commission, therefore, suggested that the army should be composed of "different nationalities and castes and as a general rule, mixed promiscuously through each regiment." Thus though Indian Army soldiers were recruited from all over the country, they were regimented on social and religious distinctions prevailing within Indian society. Instead of mingling the new recruits, who belonged to various castes and creeds and came from the distant regions, into a compact entity, there were built up Jat regiments, Rajput regiments, Maratha regiments and so on. These tendencies hindered the growth of national consciousness in India.

Thus, long before the application of the dictum of communal representation in politics, the experiment had been introduced in Army. At the same time, care was taken to keep the numbers of Hindus and Muslims well balanced. The regiments were composed of a mixture of companies or troops; for example, one cavalry regiment of 8 troops had 3 Sikhs, 3 Muhammadan and 2 Hindu troops.⁹ No Indian, high or low, was appointed as a commissioned officer. When Lord Dufferin proposed that a commission for the Maharajah of Cooch Behar be granted, the proposal was turned down as it would have set a dangerous precedent.

The policy advocated by Lord Elphinstone, "Divide et impera was the old Roman motto, and it should be ours," ¹⁰ was recognized by Sir Charles Wood, Secretary of State from 1853 to 1866. He instructed, "prevent all having a

8. *Peel Commission Report*, 1859, No. 1, Major General H.T. Tucker, dated September 18, paper, p. 9.

9. Vide, *The Army Book of the British Empire*, n. 1, p. 457.

10. Note 8, Appendix III, p. 146.

common feeling",¹¹ and "avoid a fraternizing and combining among the troops."¹² This was faithfully carried out, and a reply to the question "how far we can trust the native army, officers or men"?¹³ was found. Indians were relegated to an inferior status and all positions of trust and responsibility were shut upon them. Such developments were bound to create anti-British feelings all over the country.

Indian Civil Service

Among other institutions introduced by the British Government the Indian Civil Service was the most important from the point of view of this study. Its members had direct contact with the people of India as a result of the nature of the work assigned to them by the British Government. Before we embark on the study of this political institution, it will be appropriate to seek some background knowledge of the hierarchical structure of the British administration in India.

India was governed by an individual in the name of the King. The authority of the Crown over Indian affairs in England was exercised by the Secretary of State, who inherited, subject to the rights of the Council of India and to the powers reserved to itself by Parliament, all the powers and duties of the Board of Control and of the East India Company with respect to the government and revenues of India. As a member of the British Cabinet he was responsible to and represented the authority of Parliament. His Council, the Council of India, conducted under his direction the business transacted in the United Kingdom in relation to the Government of India, and the correspondence with India. In certain matters, including the expenditure of Indian revenues and the raising of loans in Great Britain, the orders of the Secretary of State required to be supported by a majority of votes in the Council. But on all other matters the determination of the Secretary of State was final. He had the power of giving orders to every officer in India, including the Governor-General; but all such orders, unless

11. *Wood Papers*: Wood to Elgin, 3 March 1882.

12. *Ibid.*, Wood to Elgin, 10 May 1862.

13. *Northbrook Papers*: Northbrook to Salisbury, 14 January 1875.

they were urgent or dealt with secret matters, must first be communicated to this Council. The Royal Titles Act of 1877 clearly announced the subordination of the Governor-General and his Council to the supreme authority of the Secretary of State. The British Parliament rarely displayed any interest in Indian affairs and did not interfere much with the decisions of the Secretary of State. The Council of India was practically reduced to advisory functions. It was, therefore, not out of mere chance that the Secretary of State began to be regarded as the Grand Moghul. He had become an autocrat.

At the head of the Government in India there used to be the Governor-General, who was also Viceroy or representative of the King. He was appointed by the Crown, usually from among Englishmen of high rank, for a period which was not legally defined but was in practice limited to five years. In strict theory the Governor-General was merely president of a council, with a casting vote in case of equality. He had, however, the power to overrule his Council, or a dissentient majority of it, in respect of measures "whereby the safety, tranquillity, or interests of the British possessions in India were affected. He was also empowered, in cases of emergency, to make ordinances "for the peace and good government" of the country, which should have the force of law for six months. He had also by law, apart from the influence which his position as head of the Government gave him over his colleagues, certain powers of control over the legislation of his own and the provincial councils. His assent was required for every Act passed by any of the legislative councils, or he might reserve the Act for the "expression of the pleasure" of the Crown. On certain questions also, such as loans, religious usages, military or political matters, no measure could be introduced into any of the legislative councils without his previous sanction. Legislative Councils, therefore, were mere legislative committees of the Government and did not contain elements of responsible institutions.

But the Governor-General was himself shorn of all power to take final verdicts in legislative, financial and administrative affairs by the assertion of the supreme power by, practically speaking, an autocratic and irresponsible

Secretary of State, who had generally no straight experience of Indian problems. In India the regime was surrounded by forces which were highly reactionary and of vested interests, like those of civil services and the non-official groups of Westerners — bourgeoisie, feudal planters or investing industrialists.

In these circumstances, it was almost improbable for the Government of India to have a long-term policy for tackling the newly arising and greatly complicated affairs, the problems of a changing country. It was deeply involved in the problems of the day. The Government in England, by its very constitutional limitations, was equally unable to check the growth of such a phenomenon. The authors of the Montford Report (1917-18) were compelled to observe:

Parliament's omission to institute regular means of reviewing the Indian administration is as much responsible as any single cause for our failure in the face of growing nationalist feeling in India, to think out and to work out a policy of continuous advance.¹⁴

The policy of the Executive Council of the Governor-General was based on two deep-seated convictions: (i) the paramountcy of imperial interests and (ii) the supposed "unfitness" of natives for self-rule. These imperialistic convictions dictated the pursuit of a dual policy — firstly, dependence on military force which would be adequate to face the challenges both from within and without; and secondly, the laying down of an efficient system of administration. A reference to the merits and demerits of the reorganization of the army after 1857, which helped as well as hindered the growth of national consciousness, has already been made in the beginning of this chapter.

The scheme of the civil services in India divided the machinery for the civil administration into (i) the "Civil Services", in charge of the general and judicial administration

14. *Montagu-Chelmsford Report* (Government of India, 1919), p. 30.

and (ii) several special services or departments concerned with the public utility works.

The Civil Services had grown out of the staff of merchants, factors and writers employed by the East India Company. They conducted the executive and judicial administration and other subjects of business not assigned to any special department. They comprised, since the reorganization effected as a consequence of the report of the Public Service Commission of 1886-87, (1) an Indian Civil Service; (2) the Provincial Services, executive and judicial branches; (3) the subordinate civil services. The Indian Civil Service, formerly known as the Covenanted Civil Service, was recruited in England by an examination open to all natural-born British subjects, a term which included natives of India and the colonies, as well as persons born in the British Islands.

Positive Side

It is undeniable that the Indian Civil Service also made a positive contribution in helping the growth of national consciousness. Not only it did provide a centralized structure for the administration of the country, thereby penetrating every nook and corner of India. It also gave a uniform law to every citizen of India and imparted confidence in the equitability of justice. Also, for the first time in Asia, development plans, however meagre they might have been, were drawn up. The Indian Civil Service built roads and hospitals and constructed railways and thereby provided an opportunity to the Indian people to travel from one part of the country to another and to imbibe the spirit of nationality. This progressive role of the bureaucracy is very well reflected in the following lines from a Gujarati folk song composed on Mr. Fredrick Lely, an administrator of Porbander State in Kathiawar, in the beginning of the twentieth century, and sung by women at wells or while doing other work:

You did away with the old roads and built metalled
roads,

You removed the old lamp and had light house
instead,

Mad, Impious Lely. ¹⁵

had not been approached in the Christian era."¹⁶

15. Even Maconochie, *Life in the Indian Civil Service*, Appendix A (London, Chepman & Hall Ltd., 1927), p. 258.
16. Philip Woodruff, *The Men who Ruled India* (London, Jonathan Cape, 1955), p. 898.

In a speech delivered in Allahabad on 4 February 1907, Mr Gokhale also praised the role of the bureaucracy. He stated that a small body of foreign officials had built up in the course of a century "an elaborate and imposing fabric" of their rule in the country and though this fabric was for the most part like a thing outside the people, hardly touching at any point what might be called their inner life, it bore witness to their great powers of organization, their sense of discipline and their great practical capacity, and invested them with a high prestige in the eyes of the people.¹⁷ The efficiency and skill displayed by these people was duly recognized by other nationalists, which is evident from the following tribute paid to them by Lala Lajpat Rai:

Speaking of the European services generally we have nothing but admiration for their general character... We have no hesitation in saying that the work of the Indian Civil Service, too, has in its way, been monumental. As a rule, they have proved capable administrators individually honest, hard working and alert, they have organized and tabulated India in a way, perhaps never done before... They all have done a certain amount of good work for India, whether one looks at the engineering works designed and executed by them, or the researches they have made in the science of healing and preventing disease, or the risks they have run in preserving order or maintaining peace one cannot but admire their efficiency and ability.¹⁸

Retrogressive Role

However, with the passage of time there developed certain retrogressive characteristics in the machinery of bureaucracy which retarded the growth of nationalism in India. First of these characteristics was the growth of a superiority complex among the members of this class. This

17. *Speeches of Gopal Krishna Gokhale* (Madras, G.A. Natesan & Co.), p. 1103.

18. Lajpat Rai, *The Political Future of India* (New York, B.W. Huebsch, 1919), pp. 62-63.

tendency prevented them from coming into closer contact with the inhabitants of the country. They were looked upon by Indians as a race apart, unapproachable and unsympathetic, "having eyes to see but seeing not, ears to hear but hearing not." ¹⁹ They were alleged to be traditionally conservative with exclusive habits and manners, leading a luxurious life completely cut off from the day-to-day living of the indigenous people, responsible to none except the alien ruling authorities. Theirs was almost entirely *official* contact. Social relations were extremely rare, and civil servants who were interested in Indian culture even rarer. The British became completely what they were already becoming during the last phase of Company rule — "a separate caste, with several sub-castes, strictly preserving the usual characteristics of endogmy, commensality, and mutual control by members." ²⁰

The pace was set from the early phase of the East India Company's government, when the officers of the Company initiated the pomp and show of Muslim Nawabs, their aristocratic style of living. Gradually it became a tradition, and the paraphernalia of red-coated attendants, retinue of obedient servants and costly living became the fashion. Bureaucratic social aloofness and anti-Indian feelings were nourished by the studies of the Indian Civil Service cadets. James Mill's *History of India*, was the text-book for the pupils at Haileybury College, and continued long afterwards the chief source, among Englishmen, of information about India. Indian intellectuals alleged that ability and efficiency might be the heritage of the bureaucrats, cultivated and inculcated by training and tradition, and might go a long way, but they were not of much assistance when one had to penetrate the curtain with differences in religion, language, customs and modes of thought, they had set between themselves and Indians, a curtain rendered denser by a false sense of prestige on the one hand, and not unnatural reserve and sensitiveness on the other. Is it not a fact, advanced Indians pointed out, that sympathy does not grow in the stifling environment of power and privilege, royal words notwith-

19. *India* (London), 20 September 1918, col. 8, p. 99.

20. G.T. Garrat, ed., *The Legacy of India* (Oxford, 1937), p. 403.

standing. This inevitable ignorance of the inside life of India grew deeper with age and distance. In the environment under which they were trained from youth in bureaucratic technique, it was but natural that the members of the Service should become obstinate, conceited and impatient of criticism. Forgetting their own glorious history of heroic struggles for constitutional government the English bureaucrats in India, instead of raising India, were themselves descending to the level of Asiatic despotism.

Lord Curzon in a communication to Lord George Hamilton while showing concern about the deterioration in the standard of the civilians, draws attention to the growing aloofness of the officials. Says he, "the increase of interest in England means a corresponding diminution of moral stamina here. It is being found out of by the natives themselves; they constantly complain in their newspapers that the Sahib is not what he used to be, and that the relations between the two races are not improving but going back."²¹ Curzon, whatever might be said about his faults, had "an overpowering detestation of injustice," and a "resolve to vindicate uprightness and punish wrong-doers."²² For this he incurred the wrath of the Anglo Indian Press which attacked him in the most virulent manner

Moreover, due to his long absence from his country and separation from his wife, children and other relatives the character of a bureaucrat was alleged to have become subtly modified in unperceived directions. There was evolved a type of character which in English literature had been called "Anglo-Indian". It was remarkably caricatured by such novelists as Thackeray due to its eccentricities. Among them had been a short temper, imperious voice, and an autocratic manner of addressing attendants and peons over whom the "Sahib" had exercised unlimited control during the period he was in office. Such continuous domination over another race was in itself a demoralizing process.

Secondly, despite the famous Declaration of 1833 emphasizing the equality of opportunity to grow, the court of

21. *Curzon Papers*; Lord Curzon to Lord George Hamilton, 21 May 1902.

22. Comment by Henry Cotton, *New India* (London, 1907), pp. 59-60.

Directors of the East India Company continued to exclude Indians from the lucrative jobs in the Government. Cornwallis had doomed the people of India to serve in subordinate positions only. Bentinck gave the concession to admit them to somewhat better-paid subordinate services. Even after Queen Victoria's cooling Proclamation²³ of 1858 the Crown's administration did not make any material changes throughout the nineteenth century. The strength of Indians in the higher services remained small. In the ten years 1892-1903 the number of Indians who passed into the Indian Civil Service by prescribed examination was 37 in all.²⁴ Theoretically speaking, there was no race discrimination in the new system of open competition, but in reality the educated classes were neither encouraged nor were they provided with good opportunities to display their talents. Thus they were forcibly debarred from participation in their country's progress. The necessity of their attending an examination, and practically receiving education in England was a bar to their freely availing themselves of the permission. Other arrangements had therefore been made from time to time for utilizing their services. In 1861 it was enacted, after reserving the posts reserved to the Indian Service, that the authorities in India might, under special circumstances and restrictions, appoint to some of these reserved posts persons resident in India other than members of that service. Not much use was made of this statute, and in 1870 another was passed, which provided that the Government of India might appoint natives of India to the reserved posts under rules to be sanctioned by the Secretary of State in Council. The rules finally approved in 1875 permitted such appointments in the case of natives of India "of proved merit and ability." But these also remained practically inoperative.

The Indian nationalists put the entire blame for this on the method of recruitment. They alleged that selections

23. The proclamation contained the following promise: "And it is our further will that, so far as may be, our subjects of whatever race or creed, be freely and impartially admitted to offices in our service, the duties of which they may be qualified by their education, ability, and integrity duly to discharge." [*Moral and Material Progress and Condition of India; Administration, 1901-02*, (Government of India Publication, 1903), p. 50-58.]

24. *Ibid.*, p. 59.

were not made on the basis of merit or ability, but on the basis of nepotism, family relationships or the attitude of those concerned with the British regime. They believed that Anglo-Indians were favoured at the cost of capable, intelligent Indians. On the other hand, the ruling authorities in India cited this as conclusive evidence that Indians were totally unfit to organize the work of their own administration efficiently and hence argued against any further racial dilution of the service. At late as 2 May 1878, the British Government in India was suggesting to the Home Government regarding the inherent inferiority of the indigenous people's appointment to the Covenanted Civil Service:

We deem this desirable as a matter of principle because affirming as we do, without hesitation, that neither at present, nor within any period of time practically calculable, can be highest and most important executive posts of the Covenanted Civil Service, be safely or efficiently filled by Natives. It seems to be highly objectionable to encourage Natives to enter a service which ostensibly offers them, as legitimate object of ambition, posts to which it is notoriously impossible to appoint or promote them.²⁵

In 1897 the question was reopened by Lytton's Government with the result that fresh rules under the Act of 1870 were made providing that a proportion in any one year should be natives selected in India by the local Governments, subject to the approval of the Governor-General in Council. The grounds of selection were either on general merit or meritorious service in a lower rank. This plan, however, also proved unsatisfactory although it secured the appointment, on an average, of about six Indians to the higher posts in each of the year 1879-1890. The persons so nominated and appointed constituted what was commonly, though somewhat incorrectly, called the "Statutory Civil Service." The Public Service Commission which sat in 1886-88 to consider the question of the employment of Indians, condemned the

25. Text of the communique quoted by the *Bande Matram; Report of the Native owned newspapers from Bengal* received upto 15 September 1907 (confdl), no. 10, p. 56.

statutory system in toto, and suggested an alternative plan, based on their proposed division of the services into "Imperial" and "Provincial". The Imperial Service was to consist of the covenanted service, later known as the Indian Civil Service, recruited in England. As late as 1904 Lord Curzon who was fully convinced that India was the keystone in the arch of British power and who in fact was the epitome of intellectual imperialism, was emphasizing:

The highest ranks of Civil employment in India, those in the Imperial Civil Service, the members of which are entrusted with the responsible task of carrying on the general administration of the country, though open to such Indians as proceed to England and pass the requisite tests, must nevertheless, as a general rule, be held by Englishmen, for the reason that they possess, partly by heredity, partly by upbringing and partly by education, the knowledge of the principles of government, the habits of mind and vigour of character which are essential for the task and the rule of India being a British rule and any other rule being in the circumstances of the case impossible, the tone and standard should be set by those who have created and are responsible for it.²⁶

What he believed was that all the higher posts, all the grades of responsibility, power, authority and leadership must continue to be filled by Europeans with Indians only in subordinate standards. The Indian intelligentsia who claimed the right to lead the country, had to be brushed aside as grit in the great machine. Their learning contributed nothing to elevate the country.

However, despite these restrictions, even if any body was selected for the service, he found it difficult to secure promotion. The strength of 'native' appointments tended to remain inelastic or static instead of increasing with the normal growth of the administrative staff. Between 1875 and 1914 out of a cadre of nearly 1,400 members there were not more than 70 Indian officers. So, practically, the Government was run by a foreign civil service rather than an

26. *Supplement to Gazette of India*, 4 June, 1904, p. 937.

Indian Civil Service. One can safely say that it was a system devised by foreigners and worked by foreigners for the benefit of foreigners.

It is interesting to recall that in 1893 a resolution was passed by the House of Commons due to Dadabhai Naoroji's endeavours in favour of holding simultaneous examinations in India and England for recruitment to the Civil Service. It was referred by the Secretary of State, Lord Kimberley, to the Government of India for comments. The latter argued that the material reduction in the European staff was incompatible with the permanance of British rule. It stated: "It was Civil Service on whose administrative capacity and fitness for rule depended the quiet and orderly government of 220 millions of people inhabiting 9,43,000 square miles of territory. It was, therefore, of supreme importance to obtain the best material for the arduous duties which these officers had to perform. Upon them rested the strength (of British rule). Any weakening of their influence or deterioration in their efficiency would create chaos, from which the country had been rescued by British arms. It was, therefore, proper that "an adequate number of members of the Civil Service should always be Europeans", and it was feared that simultaneous examination would flood the service with incompetent Indians and the safety of the British rule would be in peril.²⁷ An inquiry was also held in India as to the feasibility of implementing the proposal of the House of Commons. Papers showing the particulars of that inquiry were presented to Parliament, and published as a Blue Book in 1894, and it is not proposed to enter into detail here. It is enough to say that the Government of India did not support the proposed change, partly on the grounds that an irreducible minimum of persons having the best possible European education was required in the higher ranks, and that open competition was not the best way of selecting natives for the higher ranks of the service. Sir Henry Fowler, then Secretary of State, agreed that the existing system was based on just and wise principles, and should, subject to necessary alterations in detail, be maintained; and in a debate held in the British

27. Governor-General to the Secretary of State, Home Department (Public), No. 62, dated 2 November 1893.

Parliament on the 15 August 1894, the advocates of simultaneous examinations held it to be useless to challenge a further division on the subject.²⁸

This sort of imperialist attitude was highly irritating to public opinion in India. The continued preponderance on key posts, in the executive and political branches by Englishmen even after more than a century of British rule and western education, caused frustration and disillusionment about British promises and declarations. Imperial pride has blinded the rulers to the extent that it was impossible for them to read the complete irrelevance of their case. The moderate elements also continued their constitutional agitation for the improvement of Indian Civil Service and the simultaneous holding of the competitive examinations in India. In March 1911, Mr Subba Rao introduced a motion in the Imperial Legislative Council for the appointment of a mixed commission of officials and non-officials to consider the claims forwarded by the Indians to more extensive employment in the Superior Civil Service. The speaker lamented that after more than 60 years of the competitive system, Indians formed only 5 per cent of the total strength of the members of the bureaucracy. He added that almost all the higher appointments of the State involving direction, initiative, and supervision had been jealously kept under the control of the Europeans.²⁹

As a result of the persistent demands of the nationalists when a Royal Commission, with Lord Islington as the Chairman and with G.K. Gokhale, Sir Abdur Rahim, Herbert Fisher, Ramsay MacDonald and Lord Ronaldshay among other members, was appointed to investigate the limitations which still existed in the employment of non-Europeans in the Superior Civil Service, the European members of the bureaucracy protested against the larger influx of Indian people into what they believed to be their own preserve. They alleged that the holding of the simultaneous competitive examinations in India was totally unsuited to the Indian

28. *Moral and Material Progress and Conditions of India, 1901-1902*, n. 98, p. 995.

29. *Proceedings of the Imperial Legislative Council (1909-10)*, Vol. 49, p. 494-98.

environment, that the Indians who had already been employed in the Indian Civil Service were unfit to carry out the responsibilities generally given over to the members of this class. Mr. H.L. Stephenson, the Financial Secretary to the Government of Bengal, cast reflections upon the intelligence of Indian members of the bureaucracy when he emphatically stated:

The natives of India who belong to the Indian Civil Service are in the average distinctively inferior to the European officers of the Indian Civil Service in force of character and initiative. Their nationality would prove a great disadvantage to them in administrative charges where they would come into contact with a large non-official European community or where there is widespread racial tension or unrest. For these reasons it is not usual to employ natives of India, even though members of the Indian Civil Service, in the heaviest district charges where personality and power of control count for very much.³⁰

Another member of Indian Civil Service, Mr. G.B.H. Fell, Officiating Secretary to the Government of Burma, joined in this criticism. To lower the intelligence of the Indian members of the Indian Civil Service he quoted the following extract from the issue of an English Journal *Round Table*, dated December, 1912:

Far oftener than the Englishman this young Indian competition-wallah lacks the other necessary qualities for this career, often he comes of poor stock and is bodily unfitted for a robust and exacting life, often success has disturbed his head, overstudy has enfeebled his physique or intellect; oftener still perhaps a narrow upbringing and caste prejudice have made it hard for him to take a broad detached view... It is intensely to be hoped that they (Members of the Commission) will find some way of encouraging Indian merit without flooding the service with effete or conceited weaklings.³¹

30. *Minutes of Evidence, Parliamentary Papers* (1914), vol. 21, p. 196.

31. *Ibid.*, p. 941.

Monopolization of Power

In time the bureaucrats monopolized all political power, and the Service and State became one and the same. They were "bound hand and foot," alleged A.C. Mazumdar in his presidential address delivered in 1918 Congress, "to form a precedent lacking in life and soul." ³²

They were in reality the limbs of the regime — framers of policy. From among them were chosen members of the Executive Councils of the Governors and the Governors—General of the India, Council of the Secretary of State and of the legislative organs of the Provinces and India. Some of them were promoted to the highest positions in the judiciary. The only exceptions were the posts of the Governor-General and the Governors of the Presidencies. There was no other office in which they were not eligible for promotion. Their overwhelmingly dominating position in the affairs of the State earned for them appellation of the Bureaucracy. Their systematic training in the arts of autocratic government left little or no room for the development of those instincts which might go to curb their pride and inspire confidence and respect for those whom they called upon to govern. They no longer commanded the characteristic virtues of the Anglo-Saxon race and had largely transformed themselves into a mutual-admiration society exercising unrestrained extensive powers and the extravagant adulations lavished upon it "in season and out of season and sometimes beyond all proportion". Furthermore, they were practically immune from the operation of penal laws. They were a ruling caste by themselves. A retired civil servant Philip Woodruff had stated that the "caste of Guardians had ruled this platonic empire. They had come to a world in which they had been unquestioned masters, flattered and courted in every hand." ³³ They could make or mar the fortunes of millions. They could further their happiness or add to the misery by the simple fiat of their will. Theirs was a body, just like an official guild, with all future prospects and present privileges monopolized.

32. *The Congress Presidential Addresses* (Madras, G.A. Natesan & Co.). p. 1235.

33. Philip Woodruff, *The Men who ruled India*, n. 16, p. 212.

They considered themselves to be the real owners of India. Lala Lajpat Rai complained that the Indian Civil Servant, like the old Brahmin, was autocratic and dictatorial. He disliked any display of independence by the people under his charge. He liked to be called and considered the *Mai Bap* (mother and father) of his subjects. On those who literally considered him such he "showered his favours." The others he denounced and repressed. This had, in course of time, led to "national emasculation."³⁴

It is true that ancient India was also governed by a Brahmin oligarchy. But it had ties of race, religion and culture with the rest of the people. The Indian Civil Service was almost entirely composed of foreigners. The ancient Brahmins were, however, kept in control by the *Kshatriya*, the military caste. The mutual jealousies of these two castes afforded some sort of safeguard to the people in general. But in the case of Civil Service, the military had given full support to their civilian administrators. The Brahmins of ancient India had left a monumental record of their labours. They produced great thinkers, writers, legislators, administrators and organizers. In their own days they were as wise, energetic and resourceful as any civil servant in the world had ever been, may be will ever be. And this they achieved, by imposing a rigorous code of self-denial on themselves and their caste. Theirs was a self-abnegated life. For themselves they required nothing but a life of simplicity and asceticism. Their economic interests rarely clashed with those of the rest of society. A Brahmin was not encouraged to engage in business and thereby accumulate wealth. This, however, could not be said of the Indian Civil Servant. He received a handsome pay for his services, expected and received timely promotion until he reached a status which, from an economic standpoint, was enviable. After retirement he was at liberty to engage in trade and otherwise accumulate wealth.

India not a Permanent Home

Even after preventing the racial dilution of the Indian Civil Service, its members never made India their permanent

34. Lajpat Rai, n. 18, p. 66.

home. After retirement most of them went back to the metropolitan country. Thus, whatever experience and wisdom they acquired in India, they carried away with them, debarring India from gaining any substantial benefit to solve its own problems. Perhaps nobody among them permanently identified himself with the interests of the people. Rarely anyone stayed in India to help, or to criticize, or to moderate his successor or to build a house or to buy an estate for his descendants out of the fortunes made by him in the course of service. There was, therefore, no question of his taking root in India. There was not in India one ruling man whom two generations of Indian had known as a ruling man. Of all that which in England or the Western world comes of continuity, heredity, accumulated individual experience, or the wisdom of the old age, there was in India hardly any trace. With a lucidity of expression and in a picturesque manner the poet-philosopher Tagore also described the same phenomenon in a paper read during the days of Swadeshi Movement:

The Englishman passes through this country like flowing water; he carries no memory of value away with him; his heart strikes no root in its soil. He works with the prospect of furlough in his mind, and even for his amusements he looks to his compatriots alone. His acquaintance with our language is confined to the depositions of witnesses and with our literature to translations in the Government Gazette... How can the high and mighty have a vision keen enough to discern in detail the agonies, however heart-rending, the losses however vital, or what is so very small? So what seems to us of immense moment is negligible to his preceptions. When we rage and fume over the partition of this little province of ours, or this education or literature of ours, we are astounded at not getting results proportionate to our outcry. We forget that the Englishman is not of us, but over us.³⁵

35. Rabindranath Tagore, *Greater India*. Authorized translation of papers read by the author in connection with the Swadeshi Movement in Bengal 1905-1910 (Madras, S. Ganeshan, 1921) pp. 42-43.

The members of the bureaucracy did not feel any emotional attachment with the country which they ruled for over a century. In a simple Urdu couplet the well-known poet Akbar Allahabadi remarked humourously:

*Firinghi Se Kaha Yar Pensan Lekar bhi Yahin Raho,
Jabab Aaya Yar Jine Aaya Hain Yahan Marne
Nahin.*

While the recital of such poems ridiculed the bureaucracy in the eyes of the people, the powerful orations of Tagore, referred above, roused the country to patriotic fervour. They blazed the way of Indian nationalism and national self-respect, infusing a new inspiration and a new hope in the oppressed people.

Because of the discriminatory attitude of the alien bureaucracy racial cleavage also became very acute. Many political and social disabilities were imposed on the Indian people, whether they were rich *Bhadralok* (gentlemen) or poverty-stricken peasants. This discrimination imposed the label of subjection on them. The assertion of racial superiority also led to the growth of mistrust of Indian intelligence, however highly academically qualified an Indian might have been. On the slightest provocation of an alien superior officer his equally qualified subordinate had to lose his job. In his autobiographical sketch Surendra Nath Banerjea related the tragic experience of his dismissal from the Indian Civil Service:

The general belief amongst my countrymen was that, if I were not an Indian, I would not have been put to all this trouble, and that the head and front of my offence was that I had entered the sacred preserves of the Indian Civil Service which so far has been jealously guarded against invasion by the children of the soil.³⁶

Due to their subjection by an alien power the dependent people were always looked upon by the ruling authorities as

36. Surendra Nath Banerjea, *A Nation in Making* (Oxford University Press, 1925), p. 30.

inferiors, lacking all decorum, culture or etiquette. Their shortcomings were magnified and their virtues forgotten. Mistakes made by any alien member were not regarded as such. Lesser mistakes by Indians were considered as heinous offences. Instances are not lacking of a young foreign civilian insulting an Indian gentleman of position for no other offence than that of intruding upon his august presence without taking off his shoes, or walking before him with an open umbrella in his hand. They were broadly justified by the head of the provincial administration; while the forcible ejection of an Indian member of a Legislative Council from a first-class compartment in a railway carriage was hardly considered sufficient to call for even a mild rebuke. On the contrary, such was the idolatrous veneration for the *fetish* of prestige and so undisguised was the contempt displayed towards public opinion that strong public censure passed upon the vagaries of an erring member of the Service had come to be regarded almost as a passport for his advancement rather than as a drawback in his official career.

Nationalists also alleged that the complex of racial superiority had been so strongly imbibed by this caste of "Super-Brahmanas and Semi-Super-Brahmanas" that it had come to believe in the infallibility of its potentialities. Its racial exclusiveness in the socio-economic-political sphere was not only hostile to the racial aspirations of Indians, thereby generating the arrogance, but also transformed it into an obsolete and moribund phenomenon. It lacked revolutionizing potentialities; it was against the broadening of its base on more liberal, enlightened, rational and democratic lines.

Reforms and Bureaucracy

Besides, the bureaucracy was against the introduction of democratic institutions in India. A significant number of this class firmly held the conviction that democracy could work only in a Greek City-State or a Swiss Canton, where everyone knew everyone else. And the idea that every race was fit for self-government was erroneous. Very few of them could claim to have imbibed the instincts of democratic institutions, in these few the oriental races could never be counted, as the experience in China after the Revolution of

1911-12 had shown. Moreover, the vast bulk of the people in oriental countries was still primitive and backward in outlook. The introduction of the democratic institutions in such exigencies would mean only putting the cart before the horse. In his memoirs Sir W.R. Lawrence commented:

I should prefer to see the system of British India reverting to the type of the Indian State rather than to see the last of real India submerged in the dead and levelling waters of democracy. Democracy, like most forms and fashions of man, is very much a matter of climate. In the West we praise it, sometimes from the heart, and often from the lips... But so few know how different India is, how unlike in temperament, outlook and experience. There are certain essentials to happy stability in the East, among them continuity and cohesion. Democracy does not always assure these, even in the cool and practical countries of the West.

Warning those foreigners who were somewhat sympathetic towards introducing Western democratic institutions in the colonial countries Sir Lawrence pointed out:

We look too much from Western windows, and ignore the strange, strong Eastern light. We imagine that we breathe the same air and think the same thoughts. It may be too early to appraise the results of the democratic experiment in China.³⁷

The members of the bureaucracy believed that the rapid introduction of reform measures would check the progress of the country. They alleged that certain sections of indigenous social organism would usurp the entire political and economic power to enhance their position within the framework of the Indian body politic. Sir Walter R. Lawrence alleged:

I fear that the crude wine of rapid reform may work like poison in the veins of India. There are many

37. Walter R. Lawrence. *The India we served* (London, Casell & Co, 1929, 3rd ed.), p. 190.

lions in the path of the present experiment of reform, of some the roar is very audible. But there are many others, perhaps the more dangerous because they lurk in silence.³⁸

Such statements delivered from time to time by the members of the bureaucracy led to the growth of an apprehension in the minds of the Indian nationalists that the entire machinery of the bureaucracy was directly against the introduction of the self-government. Whenever any liberal-minded Viceroy thought or planned of introducing some liberal or popular reforms the bureaucracy mangled and mutilated them. It was alleged that it was singularly and squarely antagonistic and hostile to the advancement of self-rule and the building up of the socio-political structure of indigenous national life on the maxims of democracy and independence. It crippled Lord Ripon's early measure of local self-government by a set of model rules, practically over-riding the spirit if not the letter of the law. It again successfully defeated Lord Morley's scheme of national self-government by a set of regulations circumscribing and barricading the measure in such a way as to render it almost impotent in substance if not in form.

Legislative Measures

At the time of its formation in 1885 the Indian National Congress had passed a resolution demanding the reform and expansion of the supreme and existing local Legislative Councils by the admission of a considerable proportion of elected members. Such resolutions were repeated year after year.

But the reaction of the bureaucratic Government disillusioned Indians. Lord Dufferin's estimate of the situation was that "already associations after the fashion of O'Connell have sprung into existence, the caucus has been naturalized, and all the arts of Radical agitation are coming into use in India. A Celtic Parliament is not likely to prove the home of wisdom, justice or moderation, but imagine a *Baboo*

38. Ibid.

Parliament.”³⁹ His evaluation of the aims and working of the Congress was submitted by his Private Secretary, who stated that a little group of clever active Bengali *Baboos* were endeavouring, with the assistance of one or two Englishmen, to get up and organize and direct a political agitation throughout all parts of India.⁴⁰ Dufferin’s views concerning the council reform were highly sceptical.

When at last the British regime was compelled to introduce legislation in 1822, Curzon, then Under-Secretary of State, made it quite evident that what the legislation intended to effect was to make the wishes of the bourgeois and feudal classes in India known to the Government, no real participation nor advance towards representative government being aimed at. He believed that the representative government was not practicable for the dumb millions of India.

The inadequate and unsatisfactory Act of 1892 remained in operation for 17 years. Though half-a century had passed since 1857 and three-quarters of a century since Macaulay delivered his renowned liberal prophecy, India’s *Swaraj* remained a distant dream, wonderful to think about, but unimplementable absolutely.

When the Liberals came to power in England, they switched to the policy advocated by liberal thinkers like Lyall and, with the firm conviction that British rule was still an indispensable instrument of progress, decided that it should be cloaked under some form of indirect rule. In the prevailing circumstances, it looked wise to encourage India’s moderate nationalists in the hope of discrediting the extremists led by Tilak. In fact, the constitutional reforms contemplated by the Liberal Secretary of State, John Morley, though consonant with oft-repeated liberal principles, were basically designed to encourage support for the Imperialist regime, to create, in effect, that characteristically British institution, a Loyal Opposition. Lord Minto (Viceroy 1905-1910) fell in line with this approach, but thought that there

39. *Dufferin Papers* : Dufferin to Sir F.J. Stephens, 6 March 1886.

40. *Ibid.*, Wallace to A. Godley, 26 April 1886. For further study see Dr Tara Chand, *History of the Freedom Movement in India* (Publications Division, Government of India, 1967), Vol. II, pp. 507-08.

were other factors in the Indian situation which demanded recognition. He felt that change should not be aimed solely at placating the petty-bourgeois classes, and suggested that a council of feudal princes should be set up to give expression to other opinions than those of Congress.

In Morley's mind, there operated no belief that India should have parliamentary institutions. He did not think it desirable or possible, or even conceivable, to adapt English institutions to India. The reforms, therefore, when they came, were a mixture of autocracy and democracy — and Indians lost no time in recognizing which was the dominant element. Morley and Minto, in themselves, represented the antagonism between the liberal and authoritarian stands in British thinking about India. They did not, however, represent them precisely, for Morley—though accepting the liberal premise that 'one day' (i.e. not in the speaker's life-time) Indians would demand self-government and should not be denied it—did not believe in transplanting English institutions to India.

Making a critical appraisal of the Minto-Morley Reforms Aurobindo Ghose wrote two leaders on 25 and 26 June 1907 in the *Bande Matram*, a militant newspaper. Written from the standpoint of an Extremist the articles offered an incisive analysis of the main tenets of Mr. Morley's approach towards India as declared in his Budget Speech delivered before the House of commons on 6 June 1907. He characterized the Secretary's approach as "Morleyism" — a principle which was highly fascinating to the members of the Imperial race. The author believed that the manner in which the Secretary delivered his speech, was nothing but a manifestation of *Biparita Buddhi* (muddle-headedness), because the philosopher in Morley had at last succumbed to the wisdom of Anglo-India. Aurobindo added:

His political philosophy is the philosophy of the Hare Street journal, his poetry is that of Rudyard kipling, his history is the dark tales of autocracy and oppression gleaned perhaps from the experience of a retired Anglo-Indian.

Shakespeare and Milton did not illumine his imagination when he peered into the future of India. Mill, Carlyle or Herbert Spencer did not shed any light on his reasoning when he applied himself to the study of the problems in India. Hume, Froude, Kingsley or Freeman did not help him at all in taking a correct reading of events and their bearings. Neither Chatham nor Wilberforce nor even Mr. Gladstone stood by him with their enlightened statesmanship when he gave his seal of approval to the despotic acts of Sir Denzil Ibbetson.

Continuing his argument Aurobindo referred to the times when Lord Chatham had rejoiced at a time his own countrymen in America made a manful resistance against the oppression and tyranny of the mother country. He got up from his sick bed, was literally carried to the House of Commons, entered his last protest against the employment of German mercenaries for suppressing the natural aspirations of the people of his own blood. But "this erstwhile most liberal statesman of England", added Aurobindo sarcastically, did not display even any lurking sympathy for the obvious hankering after liberty without which a man was not a man. The author alleged that the atmosphere of the India House, the debasing responsibility of office, the intoxication of power, had "brought out the Jingo and killed the man." Adding further Aurobindo charged that there was some higher mystical power behind Morley which had withdrawn from his face the "veil of Liberalism" and had laid him bare before people's eyes as the typical John Bull with the full equipment of tiger qualities. Mr. Morley's vision was obscured, his intellect paralysed, his imagination darkened and his mind shrunk back into its old Saxon narrowness. In short, his *biparita buddhi* was the sure precursor of the fall of the British Empire and the beginning of a new order of things, Aurobindo said:

Mr. Morley is a victim to this *biparita buddhi* as his predecessors were on the eve of the American Revolution, as Duryodhana and Dhritarashtra were on the eve of the battle of Kurukshetra, as Ravana was before the fall of the mighty Rakshasha kingdom, as the ancient tyrants or the French monarchs were

before they made way for the emancipation of their section of humanity... The *biparita buddhi* that helps the regeneration of weak and oppressed peoples is manifestly at work. We welcome it and pray for its complete ascendancy for sometime in Mr. Morley and other British statesman.⁴¹

Aurobindo continued to express his opinion against Minto-Morley Reforms. Writing on 24 October 1907 he remarked that the people of India would welcome the bureaucracy — as they understood its motives — to take any measure to protect its own interests, but the pharisaic account of humanitarianism displayed in the sayings of liberals like Morley was most insulting to people with a “grain” of self-respect in them. He said, “Between the Anglo-Indian bureaucrat and his Morleysque counterpart in England we prefer the former. His militant attitude is not so provoking as the patronising tone of these imperial pecksniffs.” What could be more unfortunate than to be pitied, he added, and both Anglo-Indian and English Imperialists took Indians to be devoid of all human susceptibilities when they wanted to convince them that in all their doings in India they had but one guiding principle, namely the interest of the people themselves.⁴²

The Morley-Minto reforms proposed an enlargement of the councils. Its provisions increased the membership of the Central Legislative Council from 16 to 60; 27 of whom were to be elected by vested-interest classes like the trade associations and landlords. They were not the people whom Macaulay foresaw as “Indian in colour and blood, but English in taste, in opinions, in morals, and in intellect”,⁴³ who were to be the acknowledged inheritors of British regime.

Time was speedily passing. The 1909 Reforms had created the shadow of responsible government — though it

41. Haridas Mukherjee Uma Mukherjee, compiled and edited, *Sir Aurobindo and the New Thought in Indian Politics; Being a collection of his writings with a short biographical sketch* (Calcutta, 1964), pp. 92-100.

42. *Ibid*, p. 200.

43. Macaulay, *Minute on Education*, 1835.

was difficult to see why the British Government should have thought that nationalists would be content with a shadow.

These concessions did not satisfy nationalist sections and agitation for further reforms continued unabated. In 1917 an announcement was made to further concessions. These were embodied in the Government of India Act of 1919, known as the Montagu Reforms. Although the ruling circles claimed that the Act was a major step forward in the technique of responsible government, it was not so in practice. In theory the powers of the new legislatures were extensive, the Governor-General remained the real authority; he could 'certify' measures rejected by the legislatures, and if necessary rule by ordinance.

In his report, Montagu felt himself justified in maintaining communal franchise, though only for the largest minorities—the Muslims and the Sikhs. When his Act was passed through Parliament in 1919, however, separate representation was extended to Indian Christians, Anglo-Indians and Europeans. This was almost certainly the work of the Indian Civil Servants who lobbied powerful interests in metropolitan country. By perpetuating the principle of communal franchise, the bureaucrats hoped to keep the nationalist forces divided and to support their own assertion that the Indian National Congress was not representative of all the Indian people. When the final Act was promulgated, the Government of India was able to relax in the knowledge that the actual effect of the Reforms would be to leave authority where it had always been — in the hands of the British bureaucrat.

The franchise was restricted in another way too — by a sliding measurement of prosperity qualifications, which meant that the number who could vote in provincial council elections was something over fifty lakhs, in elections for the Central Legislative Assembly nearly ten lakhs and in elections for the Council of State a select group of some 17,000. The population of India at the time was over 300,000,000.

The major change brought in by these Reforms was embodied in the principle of 'dyarchy', the division of powers encumbered rather than assisted by a delicate system

of checks and balances. The Central executive remained responsible to no one but the Secretary of State in London. Legislation was, theoretically, to be the function of a new central assembly and a council of state, both with elected majorities but also with an official or nominated bloc. Any legislative authority which these bodies might have, however, was rendered nugatory by the fact that such legislation as they might refuse to pass could still become law by its being certified by the Viceroy.

Though the Montford Reforms were of limited democratic character, yet the bourgeois leaders of the Congress were inclined to accept them. But before they could extend their acceptance, there took place the massacre at the Jallianwallah Bagh. It infuriated the whole of India—even the Moderates who were ahead of all to accept the Reforms. In a recent biography of his father-in-law, C. Sankaran Nair, India's former ambassador to the U.S.S.R. K.P.S. Menon (who has won recognition as an author of charmingly written travelogues) recalls delightful anecdotes about him who was essentially an eminent Victorian. The most delicious of them is about his interview with Lord Chelmsford after he had resigned from the Viceroy's Council due to the Amritsar tragedy:

“Have you anyone to suggest as your successor?” asked Lord Chelmsford.

“Yes,” said Sankaran Vair, pointing to his peon.

“That man there, Ram Prashad”.

“What” exclaimed Lord Chelmsford.

“Why, he is tall”, said Sankaran Nair, “he is handsome, he wears his livery well, and he will say yes to whatever you say. Altogether, he will make an ideal member of the Council”.⁴⁴

Bureaucracy again obstructs

It is all too evident that in spite of the limited character of Reforms so far introduced the bureaucracy could hardly entertain the idea of change in the political structure of the

44. *Times of India*, 16 June 1968, p. 11, col. 4.

country. The hostile attitude of the bureaucracy was bound to invite severe castigation and rebuke from the nationalist forces which not only criticised the approach of the bureaucracy but also warned that all attempts to retard the introduction of reform measures in India would prove futile under the pressure of time and circumstances. In his presidential speech delivered in the annual session of the National Congress in 1914 Bhupendra Nath Basu had already warned:

The days of the lotus-eater are gone...Is it possible to roll back the tide of wider life which is flowing like the warm gulf-stream through the gateways of the west into the still waters of the East... If English rule in India meant the canonisation of a bureaucracy, if it meant perpetual domination and perpetual tutelage, an increasing dead-weight on the soul of India, it would be a curse to civilization and a blot on humanity. ⁴⁵

The national leaders also complained that young men just out of their teens who were probably had enough for the Home Service and not good enough for the colonial, were generally supposed to be drafted for the Indian Civil Service and placed in significant positions of trust and responsibility. They learnt more to rely upon the extensive powers, privileges, and immunities provided by that Service than upon the art of ruling well. "Whip in hand, they learn only", alleged A.C. Mazumdar, "to sit tight without acquiring the easy grace of an accomplished rider." ⁴⁶ They generally appeared to have inculcated a peculiar morality of their own in which conciliation was prohibited, tabooed as a sign of weakness and popularity as a disqualification. They loved more to be dreaded than to be respected. Such was the obstinacy of their infallibility that once a suspect always a suspect.

45. *Congress Presidential Addresses*, n. 32, pp. 1175-76.

46. A.C. Mazumdar, *Indian National Evolution* (Madras, G.A. Natesan & Co., 1914) p. 334.

Extravagancy

The intelligentsia also alleged that the administrative apparatus was run with unimaginable costs, expenses extracted out of revenues which would have been utilized for developing the welfare schemes for the poor ryot. That is why they demanded the reconstruction of the entire administrative machinery by permitting the entry of the cheap but efficient, educated Indians of which there was stated to be no dearth in the country. There was hardly any country on earth where such high salaries were paid to the secretarial heads of departments as in India : Secretaries to the Government of India in the Army and Public Works and Legislative Departments received Rs. 42,000 each (\$ 14,000 or £ 2,800) a year; Secretaries to the Government of India in the Finance, Foreign, Home, Revenue, Agriculture, Commerce and Industry and Education departments got Rs. 48,000 a year each (\$ 16,000 or £ 3,200); the Educational Commissioner from 30 to 36,000 rupees (\$ 10,000 to £ 12,000). ⁴⁷

These princely salaries were accompanied by hill allowances, promotions and pensions. If the cost of living went up, they got a raise in their salaries. It did not matter how the increased cost of living affected the general body of the masses.

According to an American expert, 8,000 English officials earned £ 13,900,000 a year, whereas the salaries of 1,30,000 Indian officials added up to a mere £ 3,300,000. ⁴⁸

Press Ordinances

Lastly, by promulgating special Ordinances and Acts from time to time the bureaucracy curtailed the powers of the indigenous press which had been a very powerful instrument of national regeneration and advancement. In the absence of the political control the press was the only force through which Indians could engage in the programme of national progress. Through it they could spread their ideas

47. Figures quoted by Lajpat Rai, n. 18, p. 73.

48. J.K. Hardie, *India, Impressions and Suggestions* (London, 1917), p. 5.

and views all over the country, could inspire the masses to participate in the cause of country's progress.

There was more repression of nationalist forces. Agitators in Bengal against the partition were jailed; meetings were banned; demonstrations broken up by force; Lokmanya Tilak was charged with sedition and exiled to Mandalay Jail for six years; Lala Lajpat Rai was deported from India for an undefined period.⁴⁹ The repressive role of the alien bureaucracy enraged the nationalist elements in India. In his introduction to *Lala Lajpat Rai*, in 1907, G. Annaji Rao, a staunch advocate of militant nationalism, wrote :

Eversince Mr Morley condescended to recognise the belligerency existing between Educated India and Bureaucratic India by calling the former 'enemies' in open parliament, it is as foolish on the part of the people to pray for favours... as it is on the part of the Government to expect more loyalty and less sedition from the people. For Belligerents never waste their breath in exchanging prayers and admonitions but look to their own resources... Bureaucracy at best in itself with all the formidable weapons at its command to suppress a people's legitimate aspirations and, under the impression that all India is one great Kurukshetra, is bringing with one by one its battalions of Acts and Ordinances to bind, gag and suppress all freedom of speech in the land. Yes, Bureaucracy is more earnest than the people in recognizing the belligerency in India; What though guns and swords play no part in this great one-sided War? In *their* place are hurled Edicts, Circulars, Ordinances and Acts — all in the perhaps sincere belief that whole of India is seditious and on the verge of a civil war.

49. In the background of diportation of Lala Lajpat Rai Aurobindo Ghose wrote in the *Bande Matram* that the action of the bureaucracy "brings no new element into the situation beyond hastening the processes of Nationalism and bringing us from a less to a more acute stage of our progress to independence." (Haridas and Uma Mukherjee, n. 41), p. 11.

He stated further:

We have enemies in the camp as well as in Downing Street. "Shall we yield?" is the cry of many and many a wearied weakly soul. that expected Liberty to grow like a common Jack Fruit by the way side, that expected freedom to drop from above like a ripe mango all ready for the eating. Shall we yield and close this agitation of ours for more rights and more privileges and be content with the morsels thrown now and then from a Lord's dining table as at a favourite dog? No! "A people once awakened and awakened rightly, cannot be put down"... It is impossible even for an all-powerful Bureaucracy to put down an awakened nation, let it hurl its edicts even as assiduously as it may. The more such edicts, the more unpopular the Bureaucracy—the stronger becomes the Nation's cause. ⁵⁰

In the meantime the imperialist and bureaucratic regime was much more concerned with a series of devices aimed at disarming moderate opposition and, simultaneously, suppressing militant and violent nationalism. It was first decided that the Partition of Bengal should be revoked and that the imperial capital should be moved from Calcutta to Delhi. Lord Hardinge, now the Viceroy, believed that the reunification of Bengal would remove the source of militant agitation, while the movement of the capital to Delhi would not only disguise the concession in Bengal but would remove the Government from a centre of dangerous violent activity. Above all, by reviving the old Mughal imperial capital, the British Government unequivocally restated Britain's intention of remaining in India. It still firmly adhered to the unpragmatic dictum advocated by die-hard imperialists:

Men may come
Men may go,
But I go on
Forever.

50. *Lala Lajpat Rai: The man in his words*, a collection of his writings and speeches (Madras, Ganesh & Co., 1907). p. 1.

Trusteeship of Imperialism

The Imperialists, nevertheless, attempted to justify their rule and did so by pretending to be the trustees of liberty, commissioned from on high to civilize the uncivilized and train the untrained until the time had come when the "benevolent conquerors" had done their work and could "unselfishly retire" to the position of equality and homogeneity with the undeveloped people of the colonies like India. Such were the professions with which British colonialists justified their usurpation of the heritage of the Mughal and dazzled Indians into acquiescence in servitude by the splendour of their uprightness and benevolence. Such was the pretence with which they veiled their annexation of a number of colonies all over the world. These pharisaic pretensions were particularly essential to British Imperialism because in the metropolitan country the Puritanic bourgeois and petty-bourgeois classes had ascended to power and imparted to the British temperament a sanctimonious self-righteousness which was reluctant to indulge in injustice and selfish exploitation except under a garb of virtue, generosity and unselfish altruism. While the bourgeoisie found in India a ready field for its capital, the petty-bourgeoisie a dumping ground for the disposal of its increasing superfluities, the boys, and the lower middle class a land of wealth and highly remunerative employment where they could play the "gentlemen". The great proletariat, the main mass of the people, had peripheral or no interest in preservation or severance of imperial connection with India for they had to gain infinitely more from getting jobs at home and in the various commercial firms with foreign countries than from the miserably little commerce Britain had with her colonial India. On the other hand's England's bourgeois and petty-bourgeois classes happened to possess all the political powers in their country, and could yet rouse up the lower classes to meet a vicarious death on the battle field by the shrewd and unscrupulous employment, through the medium of its subsidized platform and press, of such emotional and catching language as "patriotism", "The Mission of Empire", "The honour of the country" which rendered into simple language meant "more wealth for the bourgeois and petty-bourgeois classes". And this dominant section of the British people appeared determined on perpetuating the subjugation of India as an object of endless exploitation.

.. Inference should, however, not be drawn from all this that Indians were merely a flock of fools incapable to understand the inside meaning of the tragic episode. Decrying the idea of trusteeship Bipin Chandra Pal wrote:

It is time... that this pretentious plea was thoroughly exposed in the interest as much of India as of the Empire. Without questioning the honesty of it, it must be pointed out that this trustee-idea is as false in theory as it is inevitably hurtful to Indian interests in practice; while by obscuring vital issues and obstructing timely reconciliation between Indian and Imperial interests, it offers a very serious menace to the peaceful perpetuation of India's connection with the Empire.⁵¹

Continuing his plea Bipin Chandra Pal charged the apologists of colonial rule in his country that they, for the last 153 years, persistently ignored this fact, and sought to justify this apparent political injustice, to their own "enlightened conscience" by the fancy of this trust-idea, overlooking the basic truth that no law or court of justice in civilization permitted or tolerated the appointment of any individual to the charge of a minor's estate who had obviously adverse interests in that estate.⁵² And the British belonged to this category of trustees. Is it not a fact, he also added, that for more than a century the economic resources of their country had been increasingly exploited by alien, especially British, bourgeoisie, working under the protecting wing of British rulers in India.⁵³

There was also the *Times*—Milner School of Imperialism which, while openly recognizing the distinction and even mutual opposition of an imperialist country and a colony, did not, however, regard them as really incompatible. On the contrary, the self-governing Empire and the dependent Empire were considered by it to be each essential to the

51. Bipin Chandra Pal, *The New Economic Menace to India* (Madras, Ganesh & Co., 1920), pp. 55-7.

52. *Ibid*, p. 59.

53. *Ibid*, p. 67.

other. Disclosing the real motives ⁵⁴ of the *Times* — Milner School B.C. Pal said that the maintenance of the Dependent Empire was absolutely essential for the very life of the self-governing Empire for two reasons, one military and the other economic. From the military point of view, the population and resources of the Dependent Empire represented (i) positively, a direct addition to the defensive strength of the Empire as a whole; and (ii) negatively, it took away from the potential military resources of the rivals and possible enemies of the Empire. From the economic standpoint, the Dependent Empire afforded (i) a great market for Imperial industries, and (ii) an almost unlimited source of supply of raw materials for these industries. ⁵⁵ In return for extracting all these benefits from the Dependent Empire the *Times* had something to offer. “Imperial rule means for the dependencies”, it stated, “security against external aggression, freedom from domestic anarchy and oppression ... and a steady progress towards a higher civilisation”. ⁵⁶

After reading these “pious” proposals, no wonder, even an ordinary Indian possessing the least common sense of patriotism, must have laughed under his sleeves, because freedom and progress of dependents is not a rule to be entertained generally by an imperialist system.

54. Ibid, p. 25

55. Ibid, pp. 28-9.

56. Cited by B.C. Pal, Ibid, p. 31.

B—Racial Antagonism

The fact remains as things are today, the humblest Englishman in the country goes about with the prestige of the whole Empire behind him, whereas the proudest and most distinguished Indian cannot shake off from himself a certain sense that he belongs to a subject-race.

[Speeches of Gopal Krishna Gokhale, (Madras, G.A. Natesan & Co., 1920), p. 1222.]

Till the First War of National Independence of 1857 the relations between the rulers, who looked upon themselves as members of a superior race, and the ruled, who were conscious of their imposed inferiority, were those of the good cowboy and his herd, of the guardian and his wards. According to Henry Cotton, a liberal Englishman who presided over the 1904 session of the Indian National Congress, “although there was pride, prejudice and haughtiness, there was no bitterness or hatred in these relations.”¹

After the national upsurge, however, there occurred a great change in the attitude of Englishmen all over India. They arrived in England and roused passions of anger and revenge. Lord Elgin commented on 21 August 1857 in his paper: “It is a terrible business, this living among inferior races. I have seldom from men or women since I came to

1. Henry J.S. Cotton, *New India or India in Transition* (London, Kegan Paul, Second Edn., 1904), p. 37.

the East heard a sentence which was reconcilable with the hypothesis that Christianity had ever come into the world. Detestation, contempt, ferocity, vengeance, whether Chinamen or Indians be the subject".²

G.O. Trevelyan, writing in 1866, exclaimed : "Then from the lowest depths of our nature emerged those sombre, ill-omened instincts of whose very existence we had ceased to be aware. Intense compassion, intense wrath, the injured pride of a great nation—these combative propensities against which Mr. Bright has so often testified in vain surged in upon the agitated community. It was tacitly acknowledged that mercy, charity, the dignity and sacredness of human life—those great principles which at ordinary times are recognised as eternally true—must be put aside till our sway was restored and our name avenged".³

Trevelyan's statement is borne out by the comments of the Anglo-Indian press during the national upsurge. The so-called *Friend of India* wrote on 8 September 1858 : "It became an unquestioned doctrine that our (British) rule had been too good for the people, that they were little more than wild beasts and that the only way to rule them was to abandon the paternal methods of the Company and rule them henceforward with a rod of iron."

The same journal while reviewing Col. Evan Bell's book, *Letters* written during the struggle of 1857, asked, "how Christian and idolator, saxon and Asiatic, light and darkness are to co-exist".⁴ In its proposal as to how India should be governed it stated : "All modes of action based on false theory are false likewise. Any relaxation of our military control, any attempt to cover the steel hand with a velvet glove must be temporarily abandoned. The Asiatic, true to his training of 2,000 years, respects only the strong and his rulers must prove that their armed strength is irresistible".⁵ It called upon the regime to rule India as a part of the

2. Quoted by J. Morley, *Life of Cobden* Vol. II, p. 190.

3. G.O. Trevelyan, *The Competition Wallah* (London, Macmillan, 1866), p. 242.

4. *The Friend of India*, 15 September 1859.

5. Ibid.

British Empire and as a conquered foreign country, the home of an inferior race.

This feeling of deadly hatred was shared for the time being by all Englishmen, officials and non-officials. "Invectives against the treacherous blood-thirsty Mussulman, ironical sneers about the 'mild Hindoo' were nuts alike to the civilian and the planter".⁶ A Judge in Bengal transported a native for life for stealing 4 annas. Fuller, a planter, was only fined Rs. 30 for killing his *syce* (Groom). The British-edited press almost without fail came to the rescue of the culprits, collected funds for their defence and paid their fines. "He who stands by his own order need never fear the crowd", was recommended by a leading Anglo-Indian weekly.⁷ The correspondence exchanged between Sir Charles Wood and Lord Elgin is also sufficient proof of this highhandedness.⁸

To the disclosures of the highest officials may be added other testimony. Gobdan related in a letter to Bright: "Chance has thrown me in the society of some ladies who have lately returned from India where they were accustomed to barrack life, their husbands being officers in native regiments. I find the common epithet applied to our fellow subjects in Hindoostan is nigger".⁹ In another letter he confesses, "I now regard the task (the reform of Indian Government) as utterly hopeless. Recent and present events are placing an impassable gulf between the races."¹⁰

Trevelyan observed, "Natives almost invariably travel third class...The most wealthy Hindoos would probably go first class if it were not for a well-founded fear of the Sahibs".¹¹

Instances of insults to and manhandling of Indians are recorded by Trevelyan and others. Trevelyan himself

6. Trevelyan n. 3, p. 262.

7. Quoted by Henry J.S. Cotton, n. 1, p. 50.

8. See *Wood and Elgin Papers*, particularly letters exchanged on 2 September 1860, 26 June 1862 and 1 August 1862.

9. J. Morley, *Life of Cobden*, Vol. II, p. 189.

10. Letter dated 22 September 1857, *Ibid.*

11. Trevelyan, n. 3, p. 24.

witnessed the scene at the Sonapur fair when a British planter flogged a group of well-dressed, well-to-do, respectable Indians with a double-thonged hunting whip. He expressed his views on these relations thus:

The longer a man lives in this country the more firmly convinced does he become that the amalgamation of the conquerors and the conquered is an idea impracticable, and to use an odious word, utopian. It is painful, indeed, to observe deep pride and insolence of race which is engrained in our nature and which yields only to the highest degree of education and enlightenment. The lower in the scale of society, the more marked become the symptoms of that baneful sentiment. ¹²

G.F. Abbot describes his experience in India thus : "I have seen young men (young government officials in India), who have sprung from London suburbs, treating in public aged Indian noblemen in a manner which a gentleman would not have adopted towards his valet". ¹³ H.W. Nevinson found that in the railways, hostels, clubs, bungalows, and officials chambers, Indians were treated with contumely, "ill manners that would appear too outrageous for belief at home". ¹⁴

Many factors combined to accentuate this state of affairs. In the first place pride and prejudice were evoked by the imperialist heritage. The British imperialists found in the success of their arms a proof of God's approbation, a testimony to their divinely ordained mission of civilizing the inferior races.

The propagandists of this idea belonged to two sections. One was the group with the religious approach, of whom Charles Grant was an early example. He was followed by William Ward, for whom the British were the instruments of

12. Ibid., pp. 349-50.

13. Cited by J.T. Sunderland, *India in Bondage* (London, 1908), p. 73.

14. H.W. Nevinson, *The New Spirit in India*, London, (1908), pp. 115-18.

God to bring about a moral change in India. Richard Caldwell, who made a valuable contribution to Tamil studies, considered that the success of the British was proof of the divine approval of the empire; and Pope, translator of the Kuran, saw the destiny of India fulfilled in identification with the paramount power. Marshman, who was commissioned to prepare a textbook of Indian history by Calcutta University, looked on the British Empire as the benign agency of divine providence for the extension of European supremacy throughout Asia. ¹⁵

The other section constructed theories of racial superiority, which justified the will of the white or Western or Nordic races over the black races of the Afro-Asian continents. Houston Chamberlain exalted the Nordic-Tuetonic race and Nietzsche glorified the "superman". Poets and literary men popularized the mission of England and the "White man's burden". Tennyson sang of:

Ever broadening England, and her throne
In our vast Orient, and one isle, one isle,
That knows not her own greatness. ¹⁶

There was also Rudyard Kipling, who had eaten the salt of India since his childhood, yet who also adhered to the Anglo-Saxon racial myth which blinded his vision and regimented his mind. In his adherence to this obscurantist view he failed to see dispassionately the universality and all-inclusiveness of Indian civilization. Since 2500 B.C. India had had perpetual and living contacts with the outside world on both sides of the globe. So this country became a meeting ground and melting pot for many cultural elements. Yet Kipling, since he had blind faith in the superiority of the Anglo-Saxon race, believed that the Occident and Orient could not face each other harmoniously, each learning from the other what it did not know. He, therefore, delegated to his chosen race the onerous task of civilizing the East. He wrote in 1889:

15. C.H. Philips, *Historians of India, Pakistan and Ceylon* (Oxford University Press, 1961): See Article of Prof. Furber and Dr. K.A. Balhatchet, pp. 332-354.
16. Alfred, Lord Tennyson, *Idylls of the King to the Queen*, 187.2

Take up the White Man's burden—
 Send forth the best ye breed—
 To bind your sons to exile
 To serve your captives' need:
 To wait in heavy harness
 Our fluttered folk and wild—
 Your new-caught sullen peoples
 Half-devil and half child. ¹⁷

An apparent illustration of the conviction held by a large number of Europeans in India of a final and enduring racial superiority, can be traced in the views of Seton Kerr, a Foreign Secretary to the Government of India. He explained it as "the cherished conviction of every Englishman in India, from the highest to the lowest, by the planter's assistant in his lowly bungalows and by the editor in the full light of the presidency town—from these to the Chief Commissioner in charge of an important province to the Viceroy on his throne—the conviction in every man that he belongs to a race whom God has destined to govern and subdue". ¹⁸

Like the above quotation, numerous authoritative declarations, speeches and writings from persons holding the highest official ranks in the Indian peninsula can be referred to display how universal a phenomenon this mental attitude was during the 19th century and even after the end of World War I. To quote one or two more statements will be more than suffice. As late as 1885 Lord Roberts, Commander-in-Chief in India stated emphatically :

It is this consciousness of the inherent superiority of the European which has won for us India. However well educated and clever a native may be, and however brave he may have proved himself, I believe that no rank we can bestow on him would cause him to be considered as an equal of the British Officer. ¹⁹

17. *Rudyard Kipling's Verse*, a collection of his poems, New York, Doubleday Doran & Co., Inc., 1945, (Definitive edition), p. 54.
18. Quoted by Thompson and Garratt, *Rise and Fulfilment of British Rule in India*, (London, Macmillans, 1935), p. 481. ⁴³
19. Quoted by Sr. G. Arthur, *Life of Lord Kitchner* (London, Macmillans, 1920), Vol. II, p. 77.

This showed that an irreducible distinction existed between them and the local inhabitants. In India, as elsewhere, they built a state within a state—Anglo India within India. In practically every town, civil residence, and military cantonment there existed two well-bifurcated areas: the alien quarters with wide streets, spacious parks, dancing clubs, cricket grounds, and golf links; and the residential places or quarters of the Indian people with narrow lanes, overcrowded markets, and densely populated hovels and slums. The men of the two distinctive quarters rarely met on an equal footing because one ruled and the other was ruled. Perhaps, nowhere can we get a better narration of these two centres than in the following extract related to life in the Calcutta city during the 19th century:

Seasonally, it (river Ganges) extracted its toll of life and happiness. With as yet hardly any embankments to control and regulate the flow, each monsoon brought menace of floods. Often the angry waters overflowed the banks sweeping before them the mud and thatch hovels in which the bulk of the population lived, spreading death and desolation; and even when the floods subsided, the low-lying areas remained water-logged, furnishing ideal breeding grounds for agents of plagues and pestilences which had become endemic in the city. Of course, Calcutta was not all slumdom and squalor. There were islands of well-ordered, even gracious urbanism rising disdainfully above the sea of common human misery. There was Fort William, the seat and symbol of the Company's power and wealth. Around it were the European quarters; the busy shopping area where all the good things of life could be commanded at a price — from the best wintage wines of France to Schweppe's soda-water; banks, offices and commercial establishments engaged in the profitable task of siphoning the riches of a sub-continent for the benefit of the Island Race; elegant houses with beautiful gardens and well-tended lawns; spacious parks, clubs and hotels where the white man—and the white woman too—could put

aside the self-imposed burden and relax after the day's work was done. ²⁰

Apart from the separate identity of the two, nothing antagonized the advanced classes of India than their rigid exclusion from the European clubs in India. Even those who were members of or had been admitted in the metropolitan country as visitors to the best metropolitan clubs, were prohibited, on their landing in India, even from meeting their English friends at European clubs. They were treated with contempt. Graham in his life of Sir Syed Ahmad Khan narrated, on the authority of Justice Mahmud, that when in the company of the Chief Justice, Sir Charles Turner, he visited the Madras Club, a member told the Chief Justice in the presence of Mahmud that "no natives were allowed in the Club", and the door was shut in his face. Respected leaders like Justice Ranade and Justice Chandavarkar were humiliated by the petty British soldiers while travelling on trains. ²¹ A "native" gentleman was in the consideration of any petty official as much lower than himself as that official esteemed himself lower than a Duke. The opinion of many of these officials was that no "native" could ever be a gentleman.

The Agra Durbar

However, the new national consciousness in India did not readily yield to the arbitrary imposition of racial distinction. Whenever Indians felt insulted by its actual practice their national consciousness manifested itself through protest. One prominent instance of such a protest was on the occasion of the Agra Durbar when Sir Ahmad Khan walked out in protest against the seating arrangements where the chairs of the Europeans were placed on the pedestal and those for so-called native Indians down below. Infuriated with this insult, Sir Syed wrote an article in *Tahzibul Akhlaq*. He declared emphatically that no nation could acquire respect so long as its people did not attain equality with the ruling

20. Iqbal Singh, *Ram Mohan Roy, A biographical enquiry into the making of modern India* (Bombay, Asia Publishing House, 1958), pp. 116-17.

21. J.T. Sunderland, n. 13, p. 73.

race and did not participate in the Government of its own country. Other nations could have no respect both for Muslims and Hindus for their holding the position of clerks of other similar petty offices. Rather, that Government also could not be looked upon with respect which did not provide to its subjects due respect. ²²

Such writings by prominent leading public figures of India displayed that India had not lost its conscience and that it could no longer be subdued by the artificial creations of racial superiority. It also provided them an opportunity to ponder over their enslaved and degraded political status from which they could be redeemed only after the removal of the alien domination of India.

The British Writers on Indian Civilization and Culture

Besides its manifestation in day-to-day behaviour and from time to time in public gatherings or in private meetings the campaign of the racial superiority continued to be organized in magazines, periodicals and journals published by the various governmental and semi-governmental bodies. Books, leaflets and pamphlets were produced to justify this racial superiority. In his *History of British India* Mill tried to elaborate a study of the Hindus. It had the least resemblance to the reality. In his thesis he represented them to be not only on par with the least civilized nations of the ancient and modern world, but they were displayed to have almost without exception been lacking morality. In his account, Mill exhausted all his sources of information and all his rhetoric in denouncing Hindu culture and Hindu character. In the history of the country, he found nothing but "rebellions, massacres, and barbarous conquests". ²³ Its politics showed "that disgusting state of weak and profligated barbarism, which is the natural condition of Government among such a passive people as the Hindus". ²⁴ Hindu society is described as "a degrading and pernicious system of subordination". ²⁵ The Hindu religious organisation was

22. Tufail Ahmad, *Musalmanon Ka Roshan Mustaqbel*, (1945) pp. 281-82.

23. Mill and Wilson, *History of British India*, Vol. II, p. 123.

24. Ibid, p. 347.

25. Ibid, p. 131.

“built upon the most enormous and tormenting superstition that ever harassed and degraded any portion of mankind”.²⁶ In moral character the Hindu and Muslims shared the same vices. “The same insincerity, mendacity and perfidy; the same indifference to the feelings of others; the same prostitution and venality are conspicuous in both”.²⁷

As late as 1866 Mr. John Crawford wrote a paper entitled “on the European and Asiatic Races” in which the author tried to illustrate the mental inferiority of the Asian people and to conclude that “native” young intellectuals became mentally “moribund” after the age of eighteen. He also tried to show that the literature and art developed by the Asian people was never of a high quality. In the opinion of the author, for instance, Fardausi’s *Shanameh* was considered of a series of wild romances of imaginary heroes and of such substance that no orientalist had ever ventured on presenting it in a European translation.

The intellectual classes in India, however, felt insulted by the circulation of such contemptuous writings. In their view such descriptions were calculated to spoil any chance of sympathetic approach between the rulers and the ruled. Through their speeches and writings and essays and research papers they endeavoured to refute the logic of the occidentalist writers. For instance, Dadabhai Naoroji took the lead on 27 March 1866 by reading a research paper before a scholarly gathering organized by the Ethnological Society in London. In his research paper he replied in logical sequence to the charges against the character of Asians levelled by Mr. John Crawford. He observed that when Englishmen were incorrectly described by foreigners they of course would open their whole “artillery of ridicule” upon such ignorance, and yet it did not always occur to them that in their judgment on the people of India, with less mutual acquaintance, they might be as much, if not more, proportionally mistaken.²⁸

26. Ibid., p. 131.

27. Ibid., p. 365.

28. Chunilal Lellubhai Parekh, ed. *Essays, Speeches, Addresses and Writings of Dadabhai Naoroji* (Bombay, Caxton Printing Works, 1887), p. 16.

Refuting the charge of mental inferiority Dadabhai referred to the evidence given before Parliamentary Committees by various eminent personalities in 1853 and 1858 to display that the people of India were not below average—both mentally and physically — as compared to any other nation in the world. Continuing his argument the author stated:

No careful observer will now make the statement that the Hindu is not capable of keeping up his studies after leaving college, much less that he falls back at eighteen and never regains his lost ground. The very fact that the Hindus were even capable of producing a vast and varied literature in all departments of human knowledge, shows beyond all doubt that the capacity to study all life is not wanting... I do not know whether the remarks made by Mr. Crawford on Asiatic literature and the dearth of the great names are based upon his own personal knowledge of all these literatures or on the authority of others who possess such knowledge or on the assumption that, because Mr. Crawford does not know them, therefore they do not exist. Mr. Crawford himself admits that there have been some conquerors, lawgivers, and founders of religious sects. I suppose such names as Christ, Mahomed, Zoroasth, Manu, Confucius, Cyrus, Akbar, Fardosi, Hafiz, Sady, Kalidas, Panini, Abool Fazil, and a host of others, are such as any nation may be proud of.²⁹

Referring to the achievements of ancient Hindu civilization recognized by the western scholars themselves Naoroji pointed out that Professor Max Mueller thought that the gains of Brahmins in grammatical analysis recorded six centuries before the birth of Christ were still unsurpassed by any country. Colebrook considered that among the infinity of volumes on *Nyaya* (Justice) there were creations of highly revered scholars and that the Hindu writings were abundant in every line of science. Sir W. Jones recognized that there were many compositions on music both in prose

29. Ibid., pp. 17-20.

and poetry, with specimens of Hindu influence in a very elegant and appealing style. He admitted the production of innumerable astronomical works. He also ventured to affirm that the entire theology and part of philosophy, contributed by Newton could be found in the Vedas. Another, western scholar, Horace Wilson, remarked that in medicine and metaphysics the learned Hindus had maintained pace with the most advanced nations in the world and that they attained as thorough proficiency in medicine and surgery as any other people whose achievements were recorded in history.³⁰

Besides describing Indians as mentally inferior Mr. Crawford also referred to Hindus as completely ignorant of ethical considerations. In his view they did not value truth, justice, integrity, benevolence and charity. And above all, they could not distinguish between virtue and vice.

Such sweeping assumptions by the British writers provoked recriminations by Indian writers. In reply persons like Dadabhai Naoroji referred to the mass of untruths in the daily advertisements, bluffs in the dealings of the European trademen and shopkeepers, supply of poorly manufactured articles at arbitrarily fixed prices, the flaws in the contracts, the "immortal haunts" in London, the life in Liverpool, the street immorality, the cases of unfaithfulness in domestic sexual life reported by the police and law reports, the election corruption. But above all was the reference to the mode in which India was conquered:

War, disguised as commerce, came
won an empire, lost a name.

In a personal conversation with some Indian experts Dadabhai was also told of the double-faced policies adopted by the British rulers in regard to Hindus and Muslims to serve their economic interest. It showed how the Englishmen were bullying towards the weak, very polite and very reasonable with the strong. Coercion alone, it seemed, made them do what was right. Gratitude did not appear to be a very prominent trait in the English character.

30. Ibid., p. 17.

Thus, despite the repeated emphasis on the superiority of the western races by European writers, scholars and political philosophers, Indians became gradually aware, by their personal experiences, that they (European races) also had their flaws. They did not contain the absolute truth of humanity. The rapid growth of the capitalist economy had led to the penetration of many vices in the monolithic and monopolized structure of western civilization. Dadabhai Naoroji told of his own personal experience relating to the limitation of the commercialized western civilization and culture:

When we left India in 1855 to come over here (England) to open the first Parsee firm, the principal advice given by our European friends was to be exceedingly careful in our business in the city against the many regues we should meet with there. "In India", said someone, "we keep one eye open; in England, you must keep both eyes wide open".³¹

Though the above-noted characterization of the English race in particular and Europeans in general was full of exaggeration, it brought into the limelight certain basic vices of the western bourgeois civilization and culture. It drove the educated classes to draw conclusions that, however highly industrialized and technically advanced or materially powerful the European nations might be, their inhabitants, reared as they were in a capitalist and feudal aristocracy, were not very different from the people in other parts of the world in so far as the evaluation, and practice of the basic social morals and human values was concerned. They also did possess a good number of hypocritical, selfish and unprincipled individuals within the framework of their social organism as other non-socialist societies did. All that glittered on the western horizon was not gold.

From these studies it was not difficult for the politically conscious people to question the bourgeois west on what basis it could justify the validity of its superiority complex when its social organism itself was suffering from certain inherent social weakness. But more than this, it enabled the

1. Ibid., p. 7.

Indians to conclude that their own faults arose from centuries of alien domination, economic oppression and social exploitation. Hence this phenomenon of racial superiority could not be eradicated and their own faults could not be corrected unless they removed the alien domination and achieved their own independence which would provide better opportunities for all-round socio-economic progress in India.

These writings also made the intelligentsia conscious and aware of the ancient glories of India. The growth of this new consciousness introduced the phase of revivalism in the Indian national movement. In speeches delivered from the public pulpits the national leaders recalled the glorious achievements of ancient India. The writers wrote inspiring articles and essays, and published symposia of their researches magnifying the ancient achievement. The poets composed lyrics, verses and couplets eulogizing the magnificent achievements of their fore-fathers, ancestors, gods and goddesses. For the persusal of the reader is quoted below some lyrics composed by the famous Bengali poet and singer, Satyendra Nath Tagore:

Hail to India! Sing her praises,
Fill her heart with hope and joy...
Vashistha, Gautama, Atri
Holy saints by all revered,
Vishwamitra too and Bhrigu
These the sons this land has reared.
Bards illustrious here have flourished
None their genius can surpass,
Valmiki and Vedavyasa
Bhabebhuti, Kalidas.

The Rulers and their Subordinates

The feeling of racial superiority built by the foreign bureaucrats was reflected in their treatment of Indian subordinate officials. The relationship between these two categories of the Indian administration were fixed and settled like caste. The district officer and his British colleague were considered to be persons of one kind, the people in the clerical staff, mostly Indians, were of another. There was

no consideration of equality. The Head Clerks or even the Deputy Collectors and subordinate judges appointed in the earlier stages, however well-mannered, cultured and mentally well-equipped, could never feel as if they belonged to the same category or apparatus as the English covenanted Civil Servant, "It was easy enough for Bartle Frere to sit down by his head clerk on the ground and call him 'uncle'. There was not the least likelihood of that elderly Brahman calling him 'Frere, my boy!'" ³² At these social developments an Indian was bound to feel bitter.

Then there was a feeling of distrust for Indian staff. It was alleged to be insincere in its work. Its members could rarely be promoted to the rank enjoyed by an English district officer. There prevailed a general belief among Indian members that on committing a certain mistake in regard to their jobs they would have been treated very differently if they had belonged to the ruling race. At the most they would have met friendly criticism and been cautioned not to repeat the mistake. In their case the situation was different. When persons like Surendra Nath Banerjea committed an administrative mistake, it was reported to the provincial and central government. The punishment recommended by the authorities used to be generally dismissal.

Besides, there were cases when British soldiers injured or even killed Indians on the slightest provocation.

Thus there was gathered an all-round impression that the English rulers were no longer interested in identifying themselves with Indians.

In big cities like Calcutta this expression of racial superiority began to be resented by the educated classes, who spoke better English than many Englishmen, mastered thoroughly the writings of eminent Western scholars like Mill, Max Mueller, Maine and others and who served with distinction in the judicial department or administered with great proficiency

32. Philip Woodruff, *the Men who ruled India* (London), Jonathan Cape 1955, Third Ed.), pp. 170-71.

the affairs of the princely states containing millions of inhabitants, managed many commercial textile firms, edited newspapers, periodicals and journals in English and corresponded on equal terms with the scholars of Europe. They could not be expected to bow before every Englishman they met in the street, dismount from a horse or lower their umbrellas on seeing him coming or remove their shoes when they entered his residence.

Ilbert Bill

The problem of racial superiority again manifested and in a much bitter form — on the inauguration of the scheme of local-self-government by Lord Ripon, a liberal Viceroy, with a view to improving the administration of the various provinces. Under the new scheme of improvement Lord Ripon tried to discard distinctions of race, colour and creed in appointing Indians to some of the highest posts. These popular measures were immensely disliked by the majority of Britons and Anglo-Indians—both officials and civilians—engaged in various trades in India. They considered any step to permit Indians into the higher levels of government service as a direct threat to their position. The growth of petty-bourgeois nationalism was looked upon with disfavour and suspicion. In England, too, there was considerable opposition to Ripon's measures and policies. Fitz-James Stephen in a letter to *The Times* (London) in March 1883, criticized them on the basis that Ripon's Government intended to shift "the foundations on which the British Government of India rests."

And when in 1883 Ripon tried subsequently, by introducing the Ilbert Bill ³³ in the Imperial Legislative Council,

33. The Controversy Over the Ilbert Bill was a lesson in application of political pressure. The matter was not of major significance. It related to the judicial administration. Upto 1857 Indian magistrates in Presidency towns were held to be competent to act as Justices of the Peace and therefore, to exercise jurisdiction over Europeans. This jurisdiction was thrown into the dust by the Criminal Procedure Code of 1872 where it was provided that cases of Europeans involving punishment of three months' imprisonment or one thousand rupees fine or more must be tried by European Magistrates or judges. In 1881-82 the Criminal Procedure Code was

to put Indians and aliens on a standard of equality in matters to jurisprudence, the Europeans and Anglo-Indians were outraged at this manifestation of racial equality. They rejected the attempt as they had done almost fifty years before at the time of the "Black Act of 1837". They regarded the trial of a white man by an Indian magistrate as degrading. They expressed indignation against Lord Ripon in full force. In one of his poems Mr. Rignold, a civil servant, reflected the much-agitated fervour of racial superiority to be undermined by Lord Ripon. He wrote:

Woe to the blinded statesman
Who truckles to the base
And sets above the nobler,
the feeb'ler, falser race.³⁴

Even the British civilians were terribly incensed at the Viceroy's action. Most of them said that it was an insult, and some even went to the length of suggesting that Englishwomen would be in danger, as Indian Judges abused their powers in order to fill their *harems* with white women! At a mass meeting held in Calcutta in February, 1883, there were many wild speeches. A leading British lawyer warned his audience against 'the wild natives' who had poisoned the minds of the rulers against the British community. Even

brought up in the Legislative Council for final discussion and Maharaja Jotindra Mohan Tagore gave notice of his intention to raise a discussion on the issue of the powers of Indian magistrates to try Europeans. He was assured that the question would be taken up after the Code was passed. But before the Bill was passed, B.L. Gupta of the Bengal Civil Service drew the attention of Government to the anomalous position which limited the jurisdiction of Indian members of the Covenanted Service over the European British subjects. The Lt.-Governor of Bengal, Ashley Eden, held that Indian members of the Covenanted Service should be relieved of restrictions imposed by the new Code of Criminal Procedure. Most of the Provincial Governments agreed with the recommendation. The matter was referred to the Secretary of State, who also approved. The Law member, Sir Courtney Ilbert, then prepared and introduced a bill embodying the proposal. The Ilbert Bill was an innocuous measure which sought to remove only a procedural anomaly, a discriminatory provision against Magistrates of Indian origin.

34. Quoted by Philip Woodruff, n. 32, p. 174.

apparently "advanced" sections of the community looked upon the bill as an insult. Mrs. Annette Beveridge, who had gone to India to help Indian women, claimed that the Bill would subject "civilised women" [i.e. Englishwomen] "to the jurisdiction of men who have done little or nothing to redeem the women of their own race, and whose social ideas are still on the outer verge of civilization".³⁵ The agitation culminated in the founding of a European and Anglo-Indian Defence Association.

This measure of abolishing the judicial disqualifications against Indians also provoked strong opposition from the European planters in Bengal and Bihar, where the methods of indigo cultivation had made the peasants much disgruntled with the alien feudal class. They were afraid that the appointment of Indian to the judicial posts would jeopardize their interests in indigo cultivation.

There also appeared its strong disapproval in the Anglo-Indian press which started reversing its tone of criticism to the language of 1858. *The Friend of India*, most balanced of the Anglo-Indian papers, returned to its reactionary attitude on this occasion. It upheld the principle of race differentiation and advised the Government "to respect every right, privilege and custom of the various races which make up the empire as far as it is possible to do without harm to the Commonwealth".³⁶

Many others used for Ripon bad and abusive names, passed resolutions condemning his administration wholesale, proposed his recall before the expiration of his duration of office. No other Viceroy had been criticised so severely by his own countrymen ever before. Lala Lajpat Rai has summarised this manifestation of racial superiority in the following paragraph:

The worst offence of Lord Ripon in the eyes of the Anglo-Indians was the "Ilbert Bill" which... would

35. Annette Beveridge, letter to the *Englishman* (Calcutta) 6 March, 1883; *Confidential Report on Anglo-Indian Newspapers published in Bengal for the year 1883* (Government of India Press, 1884), Vol. I, p. 873.

36. *The friend of India*, Editorial, 8 September, 1883, Ibid, Part II, p. 456.

remove the disabilities of the Indian Magistrate in the matter of the trial of the white man. "Shall we be judged by Niggers". "shall he send us to jail" "Shall he be put in authority over us?" "Never" "It is impossible". "Better that British rule in India should end than that we be obliged to submit to such humiliating laws".³⁷

The intellectuals in India strongly resented this fresh assertion of racial superiority, and witnessed in the organized demonstration of Europeans against the passing of Ilbert Bill and in the personal abusive language used freely against the highest representative of Imperial Power in India the survival in a majority of the Europeans and Anglo-Indians of the same hatred and contempt against the Indian people which was believed to have manifested in the earlier decades of the nineteenth century. Their sentiments were expressed by the *Bangalee* which wrote: "A great principle is at stake. It will be decided... whether Englishmen will rule India according to the principles of Justice and equality or by force".³⁸

Reverting to the subject some time afterwards the journal commented again: "It is absurd and iniquitous to hold that this great empire... can long be maintained by a policy based upon physical force and derive its sanction from physical force. The foundation of British supremacy must be changed... All that talk of the supremacy of race, of the right of conquest, comes with bad grade from a nation which in repeated proclamations, in repeated Acts of Parliament has abjured the claims of conquerors and has professed to govern this country upon the principles of justice."³⁹

The changes in the bill filled Indians with disgust. They rightly interpreted them as surrender to the agitation of the white community. For they knew what shames the juries constituted on racial lines would be. The iniquitous and

37. Lajpat Rai, *Young India* (New York, 1920), pp. 119-20.

38. *The Bengali*, 3 March, 1883; *Confidential Report on Indian Newspapers published in Bengal for the year 1863* (Government of India Press, 1884), part I, p. 596.

39. *Ibid.*, 2 June and 16 July, 1883, *Ibid.*, p. 897.

shameful verdicts which European juries had given in favour of European offenders in the majority of cases during the last fifty years and more was a matter of history and formed one of its blackest chapters. Judges of high character like Sir Edward Ryan and Sir Barnes Peacock had borne testimony to the failure of Justice in the most glaring cases of offences committed by Europeans. While among the people of India the cry had gone from town to town and village to village that an Englishman would not be punished. Even Lord Macaulay raised his powerful voice against it and said that a liberty which meant the prerogative of a few as against the rights of many, was not liberty but the grossest form of oppression.”⁴⁰

That a little step in the direction of equality of Indians with Europeans, promised in the Queen's proclamation, should have roused such hostility among the Europeans was most revealing. The Indian public was made grimly aware of their inferior status in their own country, or the contempt with which bureaucratic India looked down on them and of the long and arduous road they had to cross before they could attain the rights and privileges of free people. At a very early stage of the Bill, the public bodies in the land united in a representation addressed to the Supreme Council in favour of the Bill. In Bombay, a public meeting was held with a similar object in view. The Indian Press too gave its full support to the Bill. But all was in vain. It was plain that memorials and petitions of Indians were altogether too inadequate to secure their political privileges.

In 1884, Surendranath Banerjea again undertook a tour of Northern India to produce political consciousness and collected money for the national fund. Lord Ripon's departure was made the occasion for demonstrations all over the country. It revealed to the official, the depth and extent of the newly rising force of nationalism in the country. Auckland Colvin exclaimed in surprise, “the dry bones in the open valley have become instinct with life.”⁴¹ In 1885, Sir Henry Harrison, the Chairman of the Calcutta Corporation

40. Quoted by *Bengali*, 2 February, 1883, *Ibid.*, p. 376.

41. Cited by S.N. Banerjea, *A nation in making* (Oxford University Press, 1925), p. 88.

recognised that "agents, guides, instructors and purveyors of information to the Indian nation as the educated natives already are, very little reflection ought to satisfy us that the India of the future will infallibly think and act as that section of the community, in whose hands are their schools, their presses, their courts and their public offices. It is clearly destined to be the voice of India and the brain of India, the masses will be its hands and will reflect its teaching. In dealing with young India, therefore, as it is sometimes called, it is the gravest mistake to suppose that we are politically (as we are obviously militarily) dealing with an insignificant section of the community; the sentiments which are now fermenting in the minds of two hundred thousand persons will flow out, nay, are flowing out, into the hearts of two hundred millions. The greatest blunder which can possibly be made is to suppose that the effect of our dealing with the educated natives can be made to begin and end with that class." ⁴²

The abatement of the Ilbert Bill taught the people, above all, one great lesson—the potency of public agitation and mass demonstration. They lost no time in concluding that if by public agitation the highest representatives of the metropolitan government in India, fully supported by a powerful Parliamentary majority, could be forced by the Europeans community in India, that also largely consisted of bureaucrats, to yield on a principle of policy, then the future of Indians lay only in mastering the art of agitation to safeguard their own interests, and to set up a political body of their own in order to educate public opinion in India as well as to influence public opinion in England. The upper middle class intelligentsia who founded the Indian National Congress were the first to learn the technique of public agitation and constitutional representation to enhance the cause of nationalism. They were of the firm conviction that the western political institutions could also be transplanted to India.

Naoroji's election to British Parliament

The conviction of racial superiority also marked its impact on the day-to-day socio-political developments

42. Ibid., p. 91.

taking place in England. Dadabhai Naoroji was the first Indian to be elected a member of Parliament in England from the Central Fulsbury constituency in 1892. However, to be members of the Tory group this election of an Indian appeared to be an intolerable phenomenon. In an indiscreet speech at Edinburgh that year, Lord Salisbury, then Prime Minister, stated:

However great the progress of mankind has been and however far we have advanced in overcoming prejudices, I doubt if we have yet got to that point of view where a British constituency would elect a black man. I am speaking roughly and using language in its colloquial sense, because I imagine the colour is not exactly black but, at all events, he was a man of another race. ⁴³

The words "black man" were given the widest publicity both in England and India. Protests against them were conveyed from all sides, making an uncomfortable position for the ruling party. Indian nationalists of all opinions were agitated over the remarks against a political statesman whom all revered and esteemed. The younger intelligentsia, adhering to the political philosophy of armed revolution, felt greatly agitated and thought of revenging the national insult.

Dadabhai's election was also interpreted in India as the maintenance of racial supremacy to be a great fallacy. Indians began to claim that they could be racially as good as the people of any other western race provided they also had equality of opportunity. The Congress honoured the Grand Old Man that every year (1893) by electing him President of the annual session at Lahore. On his arrival in the city of preside over the session he received an ovation which had perhaps never been equalled. His conveyance was unhorsed, and graduates and *raises* (rich men) of the city took it through the city. On his occupation of the chair in the session the scene became indescribable. The audience was

43. Quoted by M. Lalitha Rao, *The Illustrated Weekly of India*, 7 February 1960, p. 17.

“mad with enthusiasm.”⁴⁴ During the course of his address Dadabhai asked the assembled people to permit him to forget his identity for the time being and to enjoy with them the pleasure of an Indian being elected to the British Parliament. “Tears of joy were seen”, writes Swami Shraddhanand, “coursing down hundreds of cheeks. I felt as if I would go and fall down to worship the man who had so selflessly sacrificed his all at the alter of his country.”⁴⁵

Lord Curzon and afterwards

The lesson of public agitation that the Indians had learnt during the controversial days of Ilbert Bill, had its first opportunity of being implemented in the viceroyalty of Lord Curzon, who provoked the sentiments of the intelligentsia to an extent no other Viceroy had done in the past. Bearing inherent conviction in the superiority of western civilization and culture he tried to convince the Oriental people of its superior qualities, which would in no way be matched with those of their oriental counterpart. To him the oriental races appeared to have made their growth through fair or foul means and having no sentimental touch or consideration of the patterns sanctioned by the canons of morality, truth, sympathy and vision. In his mistrust of the oriental people he deprecated their cultural and social values and ridiculed the entire fabric of their mode of living. In a speech delivered in London on 28 October 1898 on the eve of his coming to India as Viceroy he stated in a contemptuous manner that “the East is a university in which the scholar never takes his degree. It is a temple in which the suppliant adores but never catches sight of the object of his devotion. It is a journey the goal of which is always in sight but is never attained.”⁴⁶

In his characterization of the oriental civilization he perhaps remained indifferent towards the fact that centuries before the birth of Christ many regions in the orient

44. Swami Shraddhanand, *Inside Congress* (Bombay, 1946), pp. 23-24.

45. *Ibid.*, p. 25.

46. *Notable Speeches of Lord Curzon* (Madras, the Arya Press, 1905), pp. 353, 360-61. *Lord Curzon in India; Being a collection of speeches* (London, Macmillan & Co., 1906), p. 6.

possessed a highly advanced civilization, a well-built social organism, a conception of government based on law and the protection of the socio-political privileges of the inhabitants. In the course of his convocation address delivered at the Calcutta University in 1905 he again proclaimed:

I hope I am making no false arrogant claim when I say that the highest idea of truth is to a large extent a western conception... Undoubtedly truth took a high place in the moral codes of the West, before it had been similarly honoured in the East where craftiness and diplomatic while have always been held in much repute. We may prove it by the common inuende that lurks in the words "Oriental diplomacy", by which is meant something rather tortuous and hypersubtle. The same may be seen in Oriental Literature. In your Epics .. praise is given to successful deception, practised with an honest aim... There is not a question but that lying is looked upon with much disfavour by Europeans than by the native society. The English opinions on this subject are strong, distinct and uncompromising in the abstract; Hindu and Mohamadan opinions on this subject are fluctuating, vague and to a great extent dependent upon times, places and persons... I know no country where mare's nests are more prolific than here. Some ridiculous concoction is publicly believed, until it is officially denied. Very often a whole fabric of hypothesis is built out of nothing at all.

Accusing Indian writer he further stated:

The habit of exaggeration has laid such firm hold of him that he is like a man who has taken too much drink, and who sees two things where there is only one, or something where there is nothing. As he writes in hyperbole, so he tends to think in hyperbole, and he ends by becoming blind to the truth.⁴⁷

These utterances of Lord Curzon punctuated with the racial superiority complex were interpreted as a contemptuous

47. *Legislative council proceedings*, No. 94, p. 1859,

challenge to the national aspirations of the Indian people. They were calculated to provoke the pride of Indians in the great heritage of their race. They felt great bitterness, deep agony and irritation for Curzon's going out of his way to display his lack of perception. The nationalist intelligentsia alleged that such an unwisdom on the part of Lord Curzon would be construed as damaging to their national prestige. It was an open attack upon the character and holy scriptures of the entire Indian people. The whole episode generated an atmosphere of hostility. The people's protest against the derogatory remarks found its expression in the organisation of a public meeting held at the Town Hall in Calcutta on 10 March 1905 under the chairmanship of Babu Rash Behari Ghose. The resolution adopted unanimously at the meeting, a copy of which was despatched to the Secretary to the Government of India, stated emphatically:

That this meeting desires to place on record its emphatic protest against the aspirations cast upon the character of the people of India and upon their sacred literature by the Viceroy... and this meeting further desires to record its protest against the general policy of Lord Curzon's administration.⁴⁸

The remarks made at the convocation invited unfavourable comment on the intelligence of Lord Curzon. In his speech "England's Duty to India" delivered at the National Liberal Club in London on 15 November 1905 Gokhale stated: "He (Curzon) attacked... their (Indians') ancestors, of whom he knows nothing, and the ideals of their race, of which every Indian is justly proud."⁴⁹

The attitude of alien rulers exhibiting racial superiority was also retorted to in an ironical style by the famous Urdu poet Akbar Allhabadi when he stated:

*Native se nahin ho sakate
Jo gore to kya gam hai;
Gore bhi to Bande se khuda
Ho nahin sakate.*

48. Home (Public) — A, Progs., No. 8, (confd), 1905, p. 6.

49. *Speeches of Gopal Krishna Gokhale* (Madras, G.A. Natesan & Co., 1920, 2nd ed., p. 1094.

Non-fulfilment of Pledges

Students of the history of British rule in India are well aware that in 1833 the British Parliament passed a famous statute implying that no native of India should by reason only of his religion, place of birth, descent, colour or any such consideration, be disabled from holding any place, office or employment under the British ruling authorities. The Board of Directors made it clear to the Government of India that the meaning of the enactment they took to be that there would be no "governing caste" in British India and that fitness was henceforth to be the criterion of eligibility. This Parliamentary declaration was reaffirmed by Queen Victoria in her well known proclamation of 1858 on the suppression of the First War of National Independence. However these pledges were alleged to have remained merely uneffected paper pledges and "dead letters" at least till the end of the 19th century. No faithful implementation of them, it was alleged, was made for the next 40 years. The thaw set in only 1870 when one highly qualified Indian citizen was permitted to enter the core of the Civil Service, which contained 825 European officers. Except this one appointment the alien rulers did not show any enthusiasm about connecting Indians with the upper grade administrative jobs. The pledges appeared nothing more than flattering words in these circumstances. Even the honest liberals were frank enough to admit that these public pledges did not carry much weight. They were taken as a sheer matter of pacifying the rebellious sentiments of the people who still remembered the battle of Plassey and the famous war of 1857-58. In a confidential letter even Lord Lytton, Viceroy of India in 1875, wrote to the then Secretary of State for India:

We all know that these claims and expectations never can or will be fulfilled. We had the choice between prohibiting them (the Indians) and cheating them and we have chosen the least straight-forward course... I do not hesitate to say that both the Government of England and of India appear to me up to the present moment unable to answer satisfactorily the charges of having taken every means in their power

of breaking to the hearts the words of promise they have uttered to the ear. ⁴⁹

However dubious the role might have been of the alien rulers English education and a closer contact with western political developments and technological advancements raised the intelligence and expanded the vision of Indians. The methods of English enterprise gave them new ideals of citizenship and inspired them with the new conceptions of national duties. They started feeling strongly the vivifying touch of the newly emerging national consciousness, which lay beneath what Mr. Valentine Chirol designated as "Indian unrest." A general craving for popular democratic, liberal and secular institutions was observable on all sides. To enlist support for their cause they started demanding from the public platform, through their writings, periodicals and journals, from the alien rulers to redeem their pledges of 1833, 1858 and 1870.

The dominant imperialist classes, however, saw in these demands an unequivocal encroachment upon privileges monopolized for a long time by them. To maintain the *status quo* of their privileged positions they started soon enough forwarding the pretensions of racial supremacy and hereditary virtues bestowed upon them by virtue of their members of the ruling race. Those very virtues could never be acquired by an Indian minority of the intelligentsia due to its sheer existence as enslaved people. Lord Curzon gave articulate expression to their feelings and sentiments when he stated:

You base your claims for equality on the Queen's Proclamation. But what does it promise you? It says that you will have equality when you are qualified for it. Now here we have certain qualifications which can only be attained by hereditary or race. Therefore, as you cannot acquire race, you really cannot have equality with Englishmen in India as long as British rule lasts. ⁵⁰

49. *The Times* (London), 21 September 1959, p. II, Col. 5.

50. Cited in *Speeches of Gopal Krishna Gokhale*, n: 48, 941.

Lord Curzon's attempt to lightly explain away the pledges given by the alien Parliament and sovereign in the Act of 1833 and in the Proclamation of 1858 promising racial equality, created much bitterness, discontent and indignation in the people. In a speech delivered in London on 15 November 1905 Gokhale stated:

Apart from the question of your national honour being involved in this—the explaining away of a Sovereign's word—look at...the stupendous unwisdom of the whole thing telling the people of India that, unless they were content to remain permanently a subject race in their own country, their interests and those of British rule were not identical. After this, how can any Englishman complain if my countrymen regarded, as they have been latterly regarding your rule in India as maintained not to promote their interests, but for a selfish purpose? ⁵¹

Indians felt bitterly weary of the “hollow” words uttered and promises made in the past. They appeared to be associated only with frustrated hopes and unredeemed pledges. What was the use of carving in golden or memorial tablets, they contented, of these words, when a handful of colonials were nullifying them. In their view the entire bureaucracy regarded the Queen's Proclamation as an “anathema maranatha”, the National Congress a “Frankenstein”, and India as an “Oyster to be opened with the sword”. Their rulers were primarily interested in keeping them in a state of perpetual slavery. “Such men”, stated Rash Behari Ghose at the 1906 session of the Congress, “are false to their salt, false to their king, and false to their country”. ⁵²

The question of attaining certain posts in the administration was not merely a question of getting privileges. It was not a question which was going to leave its impact not only on a minority of the intelligentsia, but one which was bound to affect the entire mass of the people. It touched the sentiment of their national self-respect, and was closely linked



51. Ibid.

52. *Report of the proceedings of the annual session of the Indian National Congress held in December 1906* (Calcutta, 1907) pp. 11-12.

with their highly cherished ambitions and aspirations. They came to review the existence of foreign rule as a general evil. Not merely was it materially disadvantageous to the ruled classes, it was abhorred because the dominant alien class was allowed to enjoy innumerable privileges which were denied to the subject people on the plea of racial inferiority. The inequality of treatment appeared to them to be a bar sinister of a race which was mainly responsible for preventing them from acquiring the highest posts in their own country. In the 1906 session of the Indian National Congress a delegate, H.A. Wadia (Rajkot), stated:

We must denounce...in every part of our country this new principle of imperialism that the white man has a sort of 'divine right' to rule over the Coloured man; we must say...in no equivocal terms that this principle is abhorrent to God's own Laws. It is a principle which had degraded the White man in the beginning; it will dismember and disintegrate and destroy the empire itself at the end. ⁵³

Lord Sinha's Appointments Opposed

Under the constant public pressure, in a despatch in 1907 to Lord Morley, the Secretary of State, Lord Minto, the Viceroy, advocated the inclusion of Lord Sinha in the Viceroy's Council. Morley had to meet strong opposition from a majority of his own Council who were firm in their assumption that it was impossible to trust a native in a position of great responsibility, and that the appointment of an Indian was merely a concession to Congress agitation. The ruling authorities in England also held similar views. One of the main critics of Morley was King Edward VII to whom he had conveyed the contents of his proposal through a letter. The view expressed by King Edward VII on this issue in a letter to Viceroy more or less represented fairly a large section of opinion in the imperialist country. "My dear Minto" he wrote, "I hold very strong and possibly old-fashioned views on the subject, which my son, who has so recently been in India, entirely shares." He added, "during

the unrest in India at the present time and the intrigues of the natives it would, I think, be fraught with the greatest danger to the Indian Empire if a Native were to take part in the Councils of the Viceroy, as so many subjects would likely to be discussed in which it would not be desirable that a Native could take part. Besides if you have a Hindu, why not a Mohammedan also? The latter would strongly claim it." But the crux of the King's arguments was the following passage: "However clever the Native might be and however loyal you and your council might consider him to be, you never could be certain that he might not prove to be a very dangerous element in your councils and impart information to his countrymen which it would be very undesirable should go further than your Council Chamber." Nevertheless, owing to great pressure which had been put upon him by the reasoned advisers in the Government, he gave "unwillingly assent" but wished that "my protest should remain on record, as I cannot bring myself to change my views on this subject."⁵⁴

Such writings by the successor of Queen Victoria who had promised to pursue a policy of no racial discrimination, further aggravated racial prejudices. They strengthened the convictions of Indians that they must attain self-rule. In their writings and speeches, they proclaimed that liberty could not be monopolized by a few powerful races. It was a right and privilege to be shared by all the people whatever their race, religion or sex. In the 1916 session of the Congress Mrs. Annie Besant stated ironically:

She (India) is a coloured people, she is not colourless, and colourless people have the right of domination over them as coloured people.⁵⁵

Diwan Bahadur L.A. Govindaraghava Aiyar also expressed his desire to make it next to impossible for the British rulers to stay when in the 1916 session of the National Congress he stated.

54. Cited by Margarita Barns, *The Indian Press* (London, George Allen & Unwin Ltd., 1940), pp. 323-24.

55. *Report of the proceedings of the annual session* of the Indian National Congress held in December 1916*, p. 81.

We are taunted with being a coloured people and, as such, unfit for representative institutions. I would ask which is the greater evil, to have a coloured skin or to have a coloured vision... I am not ashamed to own that we possess coloured skins... but we can honestly say and challenge them to contradict us that so far as our vision goes it is altogether unclouded and clear... If we are otherwise... the effect of that would have been that we should have been where our critics are, elbowing them out. ⁵⁶

Racial Segregation in South Africa and other Colonies

With the beginning of the twentieth century and even earlier, South Africa, where a large number of Indians had settled permanently to implement the imperial requirements, became a principal centre of racial antagonism. Measures adopted there to maintain and reinforce the ascendancy of the "white" migrants over the "non-whites" especially Indians, came in conflict with the traditional values of human life pursued by Asian people, including Indians. They were considered alien in culture, civilization, religion and customs. Treated also less worthy as men and less valuable as citizens they were forced to live within rigid quarters, confined to discriminatory amenities of life, by sheer dint of force. This anatomy of racial distinction also imposed discriminatory restrictions in regard to access to the law, education, and other spheres of dignity and progress. Along with the racial apartheid suffered by Indians at home the sustenance of segregation in the political field and discrimination in the social sphere against the people of Indian origin in South Africa became the theme of speeches and writings of every politically conscious person in India. Over this subjection and arbitrarily legalized state of affairs Dr. B.S. Monjee lamented at the Congress Session in December 1905:

We are boycotted as a nation in every respect, both in India and out of India, particularly in the British colonies, to an extent of which those who have not personally seen the actual state of things prevailing

there, can have no idea. With the colonists that word Indian has no other meaning than a mere stout cooly. It is completely beyond the powers of comprehension of a colonist that an Indian cooly, as he is called then, can be a High Court Judge by dint of his own intelligence. An Indian cannot travel by the first and second class carriages, he cannot enter the main station building, but has to be satisfied with a small thatched hut situated at a long distance from the main station building. He is not admitted in a hotel because they do not take coolies in... We are loudly proclaimed to be undesirables and breakers of public peace. We cannot walk by the footpath which is there reserved for gentlemen only, but should we have the impudence to walk by it, every Colonist has the right to drag us out into the centre of the road which is meant for beasts of burden as cattle and horses and carriages. We should not go into trams, otherwise we should be prepared to be kicked out of them for our inexcusable impudence of defiling the seats which are reserved for the Europeans. The traders there cannot be allowed to have their own way even in the matter of selection of their clerks and servants.⁵⁷

The imposition of racial superiority appears to have presented to the Indians an antiquated scene of the master and the servant relations, "white freedom and black serfdom." The perpetuation of this mediaeval tendency of race pride and prejudice exulted in British domination ridiculing the hopes and aspirations of the enslaved people of India. A sharp contrast between the discriminatory existence of the Indians and the predominating position of the alien rulers received reflection in the following comment of Dr. M.S. Moonjee:

Compare it now gentlemen, with what treatment we have to offer them in our own country. To India, they claim they have a right to come as honourable guests and members of those heaven-born services—

57. *Report of the Twenty-First Indian National Congress held at Benaras in December 1905*, pp. 54-55

the Civil, Medical and Engineering Services — to dominate and rule over us in the most imperialistic fashion. What a contrast? What an exhibition of our emascuity and their steadied arrogance? ⁵⁸

The violent oppression of the basic aesthetic values of the Indians led to the arousing of racial bitterness and strife not only in the territory of South Africa but also on the mainland of India. The deliberate denial of human rights and fundamental freedoms to the vast majority of South Africa's non-Western residents appeared to it to be open flouting of social justice and wanton disregard of the ideals and obligations of the human species. Though the British Government in India continued to regard the indenture system and the application of socio-political disabilities on Indians in South Africa and other colonies "merely as a commercial transaction between individuals and drew comfort from the conclusion of the experts that its advantages had far outweighed its disadvantages," ⁵⁹ the nationalist intelligentsia in India had made it an issue of national prestige. The whole system meant to Gokhale and Malaviya exactly what slavery had meant to Clarkson and Wilberforce. On the political platform of its national organization they raised a vehement protest against the imposition of racial supremacy and attacked the whole indenture system as a symbol of "helotry", indignity and insult. In the annual sessions of the Indian National Congress the resolutions were frequently moved and unanimously adopted by the delegates.

Against the imposition of the racial ascendancy Indians in South Africa made strong protest in public gatherings and represented their problem before the authorities of the South African Government. But all their protests and peaceful representations proved of no avail and in the end they resorted to passive resistance organized under the leadership of Mahatma Gandhi. Most of the participants in the agitation were laymen, pedlars and hawkers and such. They were all stirred by Mahatma Gandhi's spirit of self-sacrifice. Instead of yielding they posed the problem of Indian

58. Ibid., p. 55.

59. W.K. Hancock, *Survey of British Commonwealth Affairs*, (London: Oxford University Press, 1937) Vol. I, p. 180.

nationality in its positive aspect. They tried to regain racial equality.

The significance of the unyielding struggle by Mahatma Gandhi and his associates against desparate odds in South Africa on an issue involving the prestige of the Asian races did not go unnoticed in India. The nationalist elements in India paid tribute to the participants in the struggle. Mr. G.A. Natesan stated in 1910 session of Indian National Congress:

They are men, made of the stuff of true heroes and real patriots and they will on no account sell their birth right for a mess of pottage... Their struggle knows no caste or creed. They are not B.A.'s or M.A's of our universities nor advocates of our High Courts. They know nothing of the liberalism of Lord Morley, or the radicalism of John Stuart Mill or of the advanced socialism of Lloyd George, and yet these men, bravemen, poor men, born of the people, bred up among the people, pursuing their peaceful and humble vocations as barbers, as traders, as washermen, as hawkers, have shown a heroism and a fortitude which make the proudest amongst us blush... They are there fighting for the honour of India... If today our countrymen in South Africa should yield, the consequences will be most disastrous and honour of India will be imperilled.⁶⁰

The nationalist-minded people strongly felt about the deprivation of dignity to their people in Africa. The disabilities imposed on them comprised an issue on which classes and masses, literates and illiterates, moderates and militants, all became one. Poets, writers and thinkers felt deep agony over the inequities perpetrated on them. Their grief found expression in a small verse composed by the Bengali poet Satyendra Nath Datta in 1912:

Ah, there, the guileless children of Ind,
Lured by the immigration-agents snares,

60. *Report of the proceedings of the annual session of the Indian National Congress held in December 1910*, p. 37.

Deprived of home and of self-respect robbed,
Beyond the seas abide in foreign lands.

Eulogizing the leadership of Gandhiji in the struggle the author of these lines also paid his tribute in the following verse:

Firm is their leader like the tree upright,
His soul flourishes by conquering grief;
On his own shoulders he bears the thunder,
Thus is their success guaranteed of course.⁶¹

The Russo-Japanese War and Other Developments

In the last quarter of the nineteenth century and in the first decade of the twentieth century there occurred certain events which materially and dynamically altered the outlook of the Asian nations towards the European racial dominance imposed upon them for a long duration. The well-known defeat of the Italian attack by the small and not-so-well-equipped armies of Abyssinia in 1896 was jubilantly marked as the first decisive victory achieved by Oriental troops over an occidental army in an open battlefield, for at least after three centuries. It revealed them that "white" troops combating against the "coloured" armies were not always invincible.

But a more significant and striking event than the Abyssinian War was the Russo-Japan War in which Czarist Russia was drawn from pillar to the post. It was an open verdict that the era of easy victories in Asia had ended; because never before in all her long chequered history had an Asian navy won a great naval fight against European naval forces. This great event stirred the imagination of the Asian people and raised a strong patriotic spirit which spread very rapidly all over the Asian continent. Particularly it

61. *Report of the proceedings of the annual session of the Indian National Congress held in December 1912*, p. 64. For further study on the subject see *Ibid*, pp. 66-67; 1916 Report, p. 63; *The Commonwealth Debates*, p. 5746, col. I; W.K. Hancock, n. 59, p. 174 and p. 5, Joshi, *The Tyranny of Colour* (Bombay, 1945), pp. 333-34.

manifested very strongly in countries enslaved by the European powers, like India and others. A contemporary foreign observer of this newly growing political consciousness in India commented:

Englishmen were slow to note the meaning which Indians read into the Japanese victories. From the British point of view the triumph of Japan was that of a friendly power... But there were Indians to whom it meant even more... Where, now, they asked themselves, was the vaunted superiority of the White man over the coloured man? ⁶²

The achievements of Japan in the Pacific War were taken by the people of India as really extraordinary. In them they considered the upsurge of the whole of Asia from her long perpetuating politico-economic backwardness and stagnation. Japan itself came to be recognized a dominant factor to reckoned with in Asian politics. The *Indian Review* (Madras) dated January 1905 commented:

A race of dwarfs fed chiefly on rice has been able to demonstrate to the astonished occidental that she can use well the "latest death-dealing devices of the White men." Japan has compelled to capitulate the very Power which once disdained to recognise her entity... She has demonstrated to the occident the winner potentialities of the Orient... There is no concealing the fact that Japan is rousing all the great nations of the world to bestir themselves. ⁶³

The Russo-Japanese War aroused a great disliking of alien rule. It gave impetus to the spirit of armed revolt against British ascendancy. Moderate leaders of the Congress were inspired to demand for the first time the establishment of self-rule in India. The very demand for the self-rule undermined the political prestige and racial ascendancy of the British regime. Presiding over the annual session of the Indian National Congress held at Benaras in 1905 Gokhale

62. Valentine Chirol, *India* (London, Ernest Benn Ltd., 1926) p. 112.

63. G.A. Natesan, ed., *The Indian Review*, Monthly; (Madras, 1906), Vol. VI, January — December 1906, p. 1, Col. 2.

pointed out that their whole future was bound up with the relative position of the two races in India. The domination of one race over the other, particularly when there was no great disparity between their intellectual qualities or their general civilization, inflicted injury on the subject people in many ways. On the moral side, the contemporary situation was steadily destroying the capacity for initiative and “dwarfing” them as men of action. On the material side, it had resulted in the impoverishment of the people. As in Ireland, the evil of absentee landlordism had in the past aggravated racial domination of the English over the Irish, so in India what may be called absentee capitalism, had been added to the racial ascendancy of Englishmen.⁶⁴

Besides the victory of Japan over Russia, there occurred a number of other political events in other parts of Asia — the 1905 Proletarian Revolution in Russia, the Turkish Revolution in 1908, the overthrow of the Manchu Dynasty in China by the nationalist Kuomintang Party under the leadership of Dr. Sun Yat-Sen in 1911. With the rest of Asia India was bound to be affected by these powerful political events. The steady development and growth of “anti-white” feelings received a strong stimulus from these political developments in the neighbouring countries of India too.

In his paper “East and West in India” read at the assemblage of the Universal Races Congress held in London in July, 1911, Mr. Gokhale asked the western powers with great confidence to revise their old conception of the oriental countries as well as the old standards to regulate their relations with them. He stated:

The traditional view, so well expressed by the poet, of the changeless and unresisting East, “beholding with awe the legions of the West, as they thundered past her, bowing low before the storm, while the storm lasted and plunging back again in thought, when the storm was over”, seemed for centuries to encourage — almost invite — unchecked aggression by Western nations in Eastern lands, in utter

64. *Speeches of Gopal Krishna Gokhale*, n. 49, p. 833.

disregard of the rights or feelings of Eastern peoples. Such aggression, however, could not go on for ever, and the protest of the Eastern world against it, as evidenced by the steady growth of a feeling of national self-respect in different Eastern lands, has now gathered sufficient strength and volume to render its continuance on old lines extremely improbable, if not altogether impossible. ⁶⁵

World War I

The beginning of World War I and the participation of the Indian people in it, was another turning point in the evolution of Indian nationalism and in the decline of the racial ascendancy and prestige of the alien regime in India. It led to further political awakening in India. Before the war the imperial powers of Europe in their dealings with their colonies in Asia generally put up a united front which was very important, as it displayed the solidarity of the western interests vis-a-vis Asian colonies. But once Europe was involved in the War all the western powers began to bid for Asian support. The inherent faith of racial ascendancy, displayed powerfully till lately, began to be undermined by the European powers themselves by hurling contemptuous descriptions at the socio-cultural attainments of one another. The entire propaganda apparatus of the British regime in India was channelized in towards proving to Indians that the nations of the Axis alliance were inhuman "Huns" and "Bosches".

Indians along with other Asian colonial people made a significant contribution towards the winning of the War. They sent their troops to Europe not merely as a few cavaliers to act as "hewers of wood and drawers of water" to their British soldiers and officers but to march along with them in France against the mightiest of German and Austrian armies and to fill the most important gaps in their "red line" in an unforeseen severe winter of Europe in 1914-15. They could not be replaced till the arrival of the Kitchner armies and dominion contingents. The impact of this new contingency of

65. Ibid., pp. 1221-22.

Indian fighting in Europe in support of a "white" nation against another "white" nation and its allies was an unprecedented phenomenon. It introduced a great change in the moral status of the racial superiority of the alien regime. To demand from the Indians to subscribe to war loans to safeguard democracy and to check the imposition of German *Kulture* over the democratic civilized world meant really an exposition of the moral weakness of the metropolitan regime to its own dependent and subjected people.

Moreover, the slogans like the right of self-determination to every racial community, defence of democracy and freedom against militarism and autocracy, a war of justice and righteousness against the violation of national morality and independence of smaller countries, made the Indian people aware of the need to eradicate the racial ascendancy of the alien regime.

Indians also took the full advantage of their staying in Europe. They were impressed by the various developments in Europe. Valentine Chirol writes:

To the great majority of these men who had fought our battles on many fronts and even in Europe, the war had brought their first glimpse of Western conditions and habits of life, and, when they came home, they had many tales to tell and often of the seamy side of the things they had seen. Some of the more intelligent who had been in France were able to draw pictures of contrasted cruelty with the miserable life of Indian RYOT. They had their share of the common victory, and if they returned not a little proud of their own achievements, they were not reluctant to convey the impression that without them the war would never have been won for England; and those who had remained at home nodded approvingly, bearing in mind the urgent appeal made to India for more and still more recruits during the last phases of the war.⁶⁶

66. Valentine Chirol, *India*, n. 62, p. 185.

These Indian soldiers had come to believe that by filling the gaps of the Empire in troops and arms India was entitled to have achieved the equality of a comradeship. All such stories travelled from one village to another and into remote jungles and highland valleys which had hardly ever seen a white person, and just at a juncture when many other circumstances conspired to produce a ferment of unrest and racial jealousy, nothing could have been better calculated to spread further and deeper psychological change in the Indian outlook towards the ruling race—an attitude which had begun with the Japanese victories over Russia and which the outbreak of the great war had only for a time arrested. Later developments were quick to show how speedily change had spread even amongst the “silent” masses.

In the course of their delving of European secrets the Indians came to know that the Europeans races also had their weaknesses. Everything was not as it was advertised in the colonial countries. There were still slums, dirty streets, congestion in European cities where the “white” proletariat and peasant classes were constantly struggling against the European trading and landlord classes. Moreover, the ferocity of war lime-lighted the drawbacks of the Western civilization and culture itself. Interpreting their state of mind Valentine Chirol wrote:

With the secret bitterness of the racial feelings which had grown up in India before the war still in their hearts, the chief impression which its (war's) horrors ended by producing on many a educated Indian who watched it from afar was one of amazement at so barbarous and almost fratricidal a struggle between the great white nations of the world; and they read into the ruin in which it seemed to have plunged victors and vanquished alike the impending bankruptcy of Western civilization. Some were genuinely shocked at the spectacle which a distraught Europe presented.⁶⁷

The death, disease and devastation brought about by the War led Mahatma Gandhi to describe the “Satanic” nature

67. Ibid., 184.

of the civilizations that dominated contemporary Europe. Every canon of public morality had been broken by the victors in the name of virtue. No lie had been considered too full to be uttered. Europe was only nominally Christian. In reality it was "worshipping demons", he added. ⁶⁸

Unlike Indians some members of the alien regime were apt to draw very different conclusions from the victories in war. Remaining ignorant of the stupendous political consciousness in India they merely concluded in their victories, the display of another new proof of the tenacity and superiority of their race. They did not generally attach much importance to the great contribution of Indians in the war, and continued to adhere to the old racial superiority complex. Thus, following the War, British civilization was at its worst in racial arrogance. Condemning this approach of the Britons in India in a letter written to the Secretary of State for India on 9 November 1917 Mr. P.K. Banerjee, a town planner of Delhi, complained:

We believe we are looked upon by White men as cats and dogs and that is the coal fire burning in every Indian heart. That England who has so many coloured races under her suzerainty, she should not set example of race hatred in the world system; and she should control properly these white people here, who are kicking and valifying India and leading astray her civil servants by every possible means and are unflaming ill-feelings in Ultra-Torism in England by falsehood and misrepresentation. ⁶⁹

Summing up, the pursuance of racial discrimination by members of the alien regime played a historical role in the evolution of nationalism not only in India but in the entire Afro-Asian world. Under the pretext of racial superiority assumed by the aliens there went on an economic and political exploitation of the people of Asia and Africa for centuries. And it often implied more or less complete apathy and indifference towards the socio-political and economic

68. M.K. Gandhi, *Young India*, 8 September 1920.

69. Home (Public) Deposit, Progs., May 1918, No. 120, p. 1.

advancement of hundreds of millions of human beings. The repressive measures often employed by the Western ruling races to quell the national armed revolts and upsurges, appear to point out that their aggressive nationalism was primarily interested in the attainment of their economic prosperity at the cost of the oriental peoples. Thus their nationalism reached the summit of imperialism—the highest stage of the capitalist economy. Enriching their socio-political apparatus, to a greater extent through the exploitation, the ruling classes in the European countries conducted long discourses, speeches and symposia often with great eloquence, sometimes laughing under their sleeves, on the economic degradation, low percentage of literacy and communal and sectional dissensions which, in their view, disqualified the “coloured” races from attaining and later on mastering the political apparatus of self-government. It rarely occurred to them to find out if they themselves fully mastered the techniques highly essential for ruling over others — intellectual perception, broad outlook, sympathetic approach, ethical and moral idealism and habitual self-denial. Actually speaking, the absence of these virtues hastened the process of toppling the entire system of imperial domination in Asia. And the ruling classes in England themselves accepted the responsibility for its disappearance in an interesting posthumous study conducted in the correspondence columns of the *London Times* on the eve of the 1959 general elections held there. Speaking at the Sydney Rotary Club, a former Chief Justice of High Court in Australia, Sir John Latham stated:

Britain lost its empire in the east largely on account of bad manners by its representatives. Asian had been treated with arrogance. There are only two great powers in the world now—Russia and America. Yet we British people tell ourselves we still have moral leadership. We are the only ones who think so... British people must give up their ideas of being a master race.⁷⁰

Endorsing this approach the *Times* dated 16 September, 1959 commented editorially:

70. *The Times* (London), 16 September 1959, p. 8, col. 2.

The future Gibbon... who takes up the task of charting the end of Britain's imperial era had better not confined his researches to the documents in White Hall and the writings of nationalist leaders in Asia. He will have to discover just what part was played in the decline by the behaviour of Englishmen — not to mention English women—who lived their lives in the East. For every Mao Tse-tung seized on his youthful road by the blinding light of a Marx, there are many other leaders of Asian and African nationalism whose temper have been stoked by a succession of insults. The arrogance of the expatriat still survives in some places... and long years abroad only insulate it from the changing attitudes at home. So it is a sad but true comment that this air of superiority of white over brown must be set against the many virtues of British rule.... Alongwith the social achievements of countless colonial P.W.Ds. will have to be set the impalpable snobberies and snubs that accelerated the end.⁷¹

A number of other participants in the seminar expressed somewhat similar views. Their approaches identified with the theory that the conception of master race was responsible for the bad manners and arrogance displayed by the members of the alien race in treating the people in Asia and Africa. Under the pretext that they were divinely destined to carry the "white man's burden" these rulers treated the subject races in a masterly fashion. This was to a greater extent responsible for creating unbridgeable gap between the oriental and occidental communities. The truth of the antagonism ultimately culminated in the loss of the Empire. One of the other participants in the symposia, Richard Hilton wrote in his letter to the editor on 18 September 1969:

Surely a wider study of imperial history shows that those Britons of the "bad old days" were the men who built British greatness. Their pampered descendants are those who have thrown it away.... It is true there have been horrible examples of this (British bad manners and arrogance) particularly in recent years when changing social conditions sent men of a cruder

71. Ibid., 18 September 1959, p. 11, col. 5.

type to represent Great Britain overseas... (These) lesser men... were carrying on the good work to the bitter end... Minority of Asians, Western educated intellectuals... suffered from this arrogance... Unfortunately globe-trotting denigrators of things British had neither the time nor linguistic ability to talk to Asian villagers.⁷²

All this stood in sharp contrast to the ideals of liberty, equality and fraternity and popular government preached for centuries in European countries. This verified the validity of Rudyard Kipling's famous remark "there ain't no ten commandments east of Suez". The endeavours made by many western writers and statesmen to resolve the dualism manifesting in the politics of the imperial powers, by arguments of biological and racial inferiority or innate incapability of the "coloured" people on the one hand, and trusteeship and mandate over the "backward" races of Asia and Africa on the other, left the oriental people looking in great astonishment at their intelligent technique of self-complacency and self-deception. This dualistic approach provided enough opportunity to the Asian people to limelight the inherent contradictions of western imperialism and disapprove its perpetuation. During his sojourn to England in 1919 Maulana Mohamed Ali told his London audience that a new kind of fatalism was preached to them — from the so-called scientific West. It was imagined that in the "darker" races there was something inferior, that God had given them not only skins of "darker hue", but also a "darkness" that was moral as well as physical. Challenging this approach he stated:

If the darker races must for ever be looked upon in this way, the fatalism of the West was worse than the fatalism of the East... You may be contended with this state of things but we are not... We have learnt the dignity of our race. We are a self-respecting people.⁷³

72. *Ibid.*, 19 September 1959, p. 7, col. 5.

73. *Muhammad Ali*, A collection of his writings with a foreward by C.P. Ramaswami Aiyar (Madras, Ganesh & Co., 1918), pp. 125-26 and 133.

POLITICAL ENDEAVOURS FOR FREEDOM

A—Role of the Upper Classes

India was not won by the sword alone; she was won partly by the sword, partly by diplomacy, but mainly by the unfaithfulness and treachery of her own sons and the acquiescence of the great mass of the people; she was not won from the people of India, but from small ruling and military classes divided among themselves and inferior in organization. If India is to be won back from her present rulers, it must be done not by small highly-educated classes but by a stupendous change in the attitude of the mass of the people which will bring them into active sympathy with a resolute, powerful and highly organized middle and upper class in its demand for absolute self-government. If this change is brought about, India cannot be held even in the last resort by the sword..., for the sword of England... has never measured its strength and will never dare to measure its strength against the will of many millions of men.

[The Bande Matram, January 1907: Selections From the Native Newspapers published in the Punjab received upto 19 January 1907 (Confdl), n. 3, p. 18.]

As stated in the introductory chapter, out of the establishment and development of the new capitalist economy due to the introduction of the western state system and the spread of the modern system of education there took place the growth of the new social classes in India, which were completely unknown to the pre-British social organism in

India.¹ The process of transformation started in the nineteenth century and with the beginning of the twentieth century it accelerated. With further industrialization and spread of modern education the distinctive features of these various classes also crystalized and left a distinctive impact on the growth of nationalism in India. Though the process of the growth of these various social classes was an uneven one, yet wherever it took root, it influenced the growth of nationalism.

Landlords and Princes

Among all the social classes the class of landlords was financially the most powerful.² As this class was the creation of the alien regime, it, generally speaking, always supported the continuation of British rule in India. Whenever any opportunity came they cast their political weight in support of the perpetuation of the alien control. They opposed the emergence of nationalist forces which either put forward demands for democratic change or constitutional reform in the prevailing administrative structure or organized political struggles for the attainment of the same. They saw a danger to their own position in the development of the national liberation struggle. Hence they were alarmed and took active measures to assist the colonialists to subdue the movement. The announcement by the Government in the middle of 1906 deciding not to implement certain measures outlined by Curzon, which would have curtailed the rights of princes and other "ruling" landlords, provided a new

1. For further study see Dr. Tara Chand, *History of the Freedom Movement* (Government of India Publications Division, 1967), pp. 108-69.
2. Digby's calculations of the distribution of national income provides us with an idea of the enormous profits made by the upper classes. Setting the total national income at £ 382,400,000 Digby estimated that £ 50,000,000 poured annually into the pockets of 10,000 ruling princes, titled rajahs and zamindars; 75,000 bankers and moneylenders, prosperous traders and their like took as much as £ 75,000,000. About the same sum was divided among some 7,50,000 small traders and shopkeepers. These figures clearly indicate that less than half of India's national income was shared by the great majority of the population—294 million people. [W. Digby, "*Prosperous*" *British India* (London, 1901), pp. 615-16.]

impetus to their zeal to support the British regime.³ Taking a lesson from the agrarian disturbances and political agitation in the Punjab the ruler of Kashmir exiled from his state the agitators suspected of stirring up disaffection. On learning of it the Viceroy was very much pleased and congratulated the Maharaja by wire.⁴ In the Deccan state of Travancore, a Punjabi lecturer was expelled for anti-imperialist propaganda.⁵ On 19 May, 1907 the landlords held a meeting in Patiala and passed a resolution denouncing all "subversive" activities and praising British rule. The chief *mahant* of the Golden Temple of Amritsar, the main Sikh shrine, in a message to the Sikh community deprecated every kind of agitation and the so-called seditious movements launched against the British Government, and appealed for loyalty to the imperialist regime.⁶

Different bodies representing various groups of the feudal lords despatched from time to time addresses of loyalty to the British Government. For instance, on the eve of the second anniversary of the Swadeshi Movement in Bengal, the big *zamindars* of the province issued a manifesto calling for loyalty to the British regime. It was signed by 107 of the biggest landlords in Bengal, including all the princes, ten of the most influential Rajas, three Knights and twenty-eight Rai Bahadurs. Other sources reported that the manifesto was signed by 200 influential landlords, such as the princes of Dharbhanga, Burdwan, Dinajpur, Mymensingh and Kasimbazar, as well as Chandra Mohan Tagore, Raja Pyare Mohan Mukherjee, Sir Gurudas Banerjee and others. The signatories remained silent over vital issues like swadeshi or boycott. A pro-British paper, *Indian Spectator* commented that the manifesto heralded the beginning of a much required change in the province.⁷

In the confidential reports submitted fortnightly to the Home Department of the Government of India by the various provincial governments there is further evidence of the

3. *Times of India* (Bombay), 9 June 1906, p. 9.

4. *Ibid.*, 25 May, 1907, p. 3.

5. *Ibid.*, 1 June, 1907, p. 5.

6. *Ibid.*, 25 May, 1907, p. 6.

7. *Ibid.*, 24 April 1907, p. 8.

anti-nationalist attitude of the landlords. According to one of the reports it was on the 30 June, 1917 that a manifesto was published by a large numbers of leading *zamindars* of the Madras Presidency, definitely dissociating themselves from the Home Rule movement and repudiating the pronouncements of their representatives on the Indian and Madras Legislative Councils, namely K.V. Rangaswami Ayyangar and K.R.V. Krishna Rao Pantulu, of whom the latter endeavoured afterwards to make it clear that his support of the Home Rule policy was at least qualified. Individual letters of warning and protest had also been published by the Maharaja of Bobbili, late member of the Executive Council; by the Raja of Kollengode, an Ex-member of the Madras Legislative Council, by Kavalappara Nayar, a member of the same body at that time and by Mirza Abdul Hussain, the Persian Consul and until shortly before a member of the Legislative Council in Burma. *The New India* of Mrs. Besant singled out the two former in some castigative articles.⁸

On their side, the British Government took proper note of these messages of loyalty; they adopted measures to draw the landlords closer to their side. In a reform bill introduced by Lord Minto was stated:

No scheme of constitutional reform would meet the real requirements of the present time which did not make adequate provision for representing the landed aristocracy of India, the mercantile and industrial classes...⁹

Expressing its views on the constitutional reform bill, an Indian newspaper of liberal views stated:

The large landowner was till the other day the butt of official denunciation: now he is the pillar of the state and him we should all fall down and worship.¹⁰

8. Home (Pol.) Deposit, Government of India, July 1917, File No. 2, p. 4.

9. *Times of India*, 3 August, 1907, p. 4.

10. Cited from *Times of India*, 7 September, 1907, p. 7.

In September 1907, an extraordinary press communique was issued to set the Bengal landlords' apprehensions at rest and assure them that there would be no alterations in the land assessment.¹¹

Guided by their own socio-political transformation in England the British regime was keen to associate this class of landlords in every measure of administrative and legislative change. The practising of this alliance, however, displayed its futility because of the inability of the landlords to emerge as the true representatives of the Indian *ryot*. Prof. Beni Prasad writes:

The transition from autocratic to democratic government has often been mediated in history by enlightened aristocratic government. The Indian Government was actually led by the landlords in large numbers through weightage to the legislative chambers. Experience, however, demonstrated that they lacked the requisites of leadership. The inevitable assumption of all power by an efficient and centralised bureaucracy in the middle of the nineteenth century had exposed large feudal holdings to the drawbacks of functionless property. The course of history had not trained the landlords to those habits of public life which enabled the British aristocracy to shoulder the responsibility of constitutional government for more than two hundred years. The new opportunities of higher education had mostly escaped them. The system of land tenure in North India was feudalistic and weighed heavily on the tenantry creating an antagonism which ruled the landholders out of the chances of national leadership.¹²

Moreover, the feudal elements were interested in acquiring political power not for the sake of leading the entire nation as their ancestors, though working under a different system, had done, but for defending their privileged position in the

11. *Times of India*, 28 September 1907, p. 10.

12. Beni Prasad, *India's Hindu Muslim Questions* (London, George Allenand Unwin Ltd., 1946), pp. 42-3.

social organism. Therefore, when they set up their class organizations they were aimed at acquiring the political power which would guarantee the *status quo* of their prevailing privileged position. It is a historical fact that genuine conservatism, rooted in respect for traditional legacy and in evolutionary dictums of national advance, can be a stabilizing factor in politics. It can also alternate in power with radicalism as in Great Britain. But defence of privilege against privilege leads to the creation of a faction, not a party. And, if it continues to gain political influence, paves the way for revolution. Thus, due to their inability to emerge as the representatives of the Indian people the landlords could not acquire much decisive political power.

In the sphere of social reform too the landlords, with certain exceptions, cast their vote in favour of *status quo*. They opposed the abolition of the caste system, *purdha* and a number of other social changes. In such circumstances there were very rare chances for this class to emerge as the leader of public life in India.

Bourgeoisie

As narrated in the introductory chapter, the next new financially powerful social class, besides the landed aristocracy, was the modern commercial, industrial and financial bourgeoisie. In consequence of the big expansion of internal and external trade, establishment and expansion of modern industries and banks in India this class emerged as not an insignificant phenomenon. The alien regime was not so much hostile to its growth and indeed was keen to associate its members in the administrative and legislative functions of the state, and this class was also equally interested in sharing the political power even in subordinate form. However, due to the conflict of interests between Indian and European industrial and commercial classes the alien regime sided with or gave preference to the European businessmen and industrialists who enjoyed the special prerogatives as a ruling race. At this step-motherly treatment the Indian bourgeoisie felt disgusted, Voicing its sentiments there appeared in *Kal* dated 24 September, 1909 the following lines:

Wholesale trade is in the hands of foreigners and we
have to content ourselves on the crumbs thrown to us

from their dishes. Goods are carried in foreign bottoms and large profits are realised by foreigners... Nations under foreign domination are always demoralised. We have become weaklings. ¹³

The extension of the preferential treatment in the field of industrial development and the imposition of restrictive measures on Indian trade with western countries, halted the process of speedy growth of Indian bourgeoisie as a powerful financial plutocracy. Due to this financial weakness as well as the social isolation of this class from the masses, there was left very little chance for this class to emerge as the leader of national life in India, however keen the alien regime might have been to put it in that position. Dr. Beni Prasad narrates this dichotomy in the following words:

Aristocracy has in modern times often strengthened itself by alliance with industrial and commercial wealth, but the big industry had made so little progress in India by the first decade of the present century that there was scarcely a plutocracy in existence to support an aristocracy. ¹⁴

13. *Report on Native papers published in the Bombay Presidency for the week ending 25 September 1909* (Confdl), p. 14.

Emphasizing the same issue in the annual session of Indian Industrial Conference held in 1917 Raja Rishee drew the attention of the gathering that "It is indeed an anomaly that we should year after year export large quantities of raw materials and import the corresponding finished products at a considerably high price." [*Report of the Thirteenth annual session of the Indian Industrial Conference held in 1917* (Bombay, 1918), p. 24]

Speaking in the same session in his presidential address Madhava Rao also complained: "The Free Trade policy of the British Government exposing even our smallest concerns to a world-wide competition the inability or rather unwillingness of Indian princes and capitalists to help the poor manufacturers with necessary funds and several other causes have compelled the artisans to give up their ancient calling and to take exclusively to agriculture...Till fiscal and financial autonomy is secured for this country we should try and help the development of industry and commerce by using nothing but swadeshi articles." [Ibid., p. 39.]

14. Beni Prasad, No. 12, p. 43.

In order to undermine the privileged position of the British commercial and industrial interests and to enhance its financial position the Indian bourgeoisie community set up its own independent organizations and associations like the Marwari Chamber of Commerce at Calcutta in 1900, the Indian Industrial Conference at Bombay in 1905, the Indian Merchants' Chamber at Bombay in 1907, and the South Indian Chamber of Commerce at Madras in 1909. In the annual gathering of these respective associations the Indian bourgeoisie criticized and struggled against the restrictions arbitrarily imposed by the alien regime on its natural process of prosperity e.g., the restrictions imposed on the free access of this class to the world market. It demanded the opening of technological institutions, financial assistance from the government for the rapid growth of industrialization etc. In its first annual conference held at Benaras on 30 December 1905, the Indian industrial conference resolved that:

This conference urges the Government of India and all Provincial Governments and Administrations as also the people of India according to their process and opportunities:

1. To found Technical Schools in all large centres for the industrial education, on an adequate scale, of the Indian people,
2. To encourage and help Indian manufactures,
3. And to foster and extend the use of such manufactures in India in preference to foreign goods.

This annual gathering of the Indian Industrial Conference also recommended to the Indian capitalists the establishment of the weaving schools where boys might learn the use of such looms. It also urged them to establish at their own cost schools for spinning, dyeing, pottery, carpentry and the manufacture of ironware and brasswork, in order to afford facility to boys of all castes and classes to learn such useful industries as a means of livelihood. The conference also resolved to raise large funds for industrial education and to establish trusts for the establishment of technological colleges on the most modern lines adopted in technically and

industrially advanced countries like America, Japan and other European countries for the training of large numbers of students in the various industries which were profitable in India. Besides, provincial committees were also to be established for giving effect to the above recommendations.¹⁵

Again in its annual conference held on 30 December 1907 at Surat the Indian Industrial Conference expressed its sense of satisfaction over the industrial survey carried out in the United Provinces and a number of other provinces and urged other provincial governments to conduct similar industrial surveys in their respective zones. Such a process, the Conference believed, would facilitate the introduction of a sound system of technical education and the well-ordered development of local industries. The Conference also thanked the Government of the United Provinces for planning to introduce a fairly comprehensive system of technical education. It also urged the other Provinces and princely states to encourage technical education.¹⁶

In its session in 1909 the Conference regretted that the proposal of the United Provinces Government for the establishment of a technological college at Kanpur had not been sanctioned by the Secretary of State.¹⁷

In the sixth meeting in 1910 the Conference placed on record its firm conviction that, "for effectively promoting the industrial progress of this country", it was essential that "the Government should establish here at least one fully equipped polytechnic college for imparting the highest kind of instruction in the applied science and industrial arts." In the same meeting the Conference called upon the Indian universities to open faculties of commerce to institute degrees in commerce and to affiliate commercial colleges.¹⁸

In its tenth meeting held in 1914 the Conference urged the Government of India to develop the Tata Research

15. *Report of the Thirteenth Indian Industrial Conference, held at Calcutta in 1917* (Bombay, 1918) 1, pp. 1-11.

16. *Ibid.*, pp. vii-viii.

17. *Ibid.*, p. xvi.

18. *Ibid.*, pp. xviii-xix.

Institute as a well-equipped first class college of technology.¹⁹ In the same year the conference appealed the Government of India to revive the indigenous industries in the following resolution:

This conference, desires to record its opinion

1) that in view of the need, as disclosed by the war, of providing not only for the Industrial efficiency of the British Empire as a whole but also of making India more self-supporting and less dependent than she has been on foreign countries in regard to her economic needs, it is necessary that the fiscal policy of the country should be directed to promoting the growth of manufactures and the creation of an industrial regime side by side with the development of agriculture and the exploitation of raw material;

2) that for this purpose it is necessary:

a) that the representatives of the people should obtain fiscal autonomy in regard to the imposition of duties both on exports and imports;

b) that the State should aid the starting and pioneering of new industries through the establishment of a department of Government for the purpose;

c) that Government should, simultaneously with a policy of introducing free primary education — also impart technical, industrial and commercial education.²⁰

Believing that the progress and prosperity of every nation depended on the imparting of industrial and technical education the Indian Industrial Conference went on recommending in its subsequent sessions the establishment of technological faculties at the principal Indian universities and the gradual introduction of technical instruction in

19. Ibid., p. xiii.

20. Ibid., p. xiv.

primary and secondary schools. It also appealed for fiscal autonomy in regard to the levying of duties both on imports and exports.

Again during the course of his presidential address delivered at the thirteenth annual gathering of the Indian Industrial Conference, Mr. V.P. Madhava Rao demanded that the Government of India

Make a thorough industrial and geological survey of the country; afford financial and technical aid; check foreign competition; encourage the opening of banks; start model pioneer factories on the reports of Government experts and hand them over to private capitalists, and purchase all their requirements in India, preference being given to locally made articles, even if they be slightly dearer or a little inferior in quality. ²¹

Like the Indian Industrial Conference other bodies set up by the mercantile class persistently put forward similar demands at their annual gatherings. To give their references here is out of scope. Suffice it to say that the demand of industrialization and equality of opportunity with European bourgeoisie engaged in business in India, was the demand of the entire local bourgeois community.

As jeopardizing of their position by the alien regime had made the industrialist and commercial bourgeoisie sufficiently conscious by 1905, to fulfil its requirements it sought the alliance of the educated professional classes which were already struggling to break the monopoly of the aliens in the services and other professions like medical, legal and journalistic lines, through political organizations like the Indian National Congress. On the formation of this alliance to eradicate the political and economic discrimination imposed by the alien rule Prof. A.R. Desai comments:

The Industrial bourgeoisie entered the orbit of the Indian nationalist movement with their own slogans

21. I bid., p. 37.

of protection, favourable exchange ratio, subsidies for the growing industries, and others... This class began to gravitate to the Indian National Congress... and enthusiastically supported the programme of Swadeshi and boycott of English goods, since it also served its own class interest... The nationalist movement which was hitherto mainly restricted to the intelligentsia, and educated middle class, secured a broader social basis from 1905 as a result of entry of large sections of the middle class and politically conscious industrialists.²²

To express their solidarity with the nationalist intelligentsia the India bourgeois classes made every possible use of the opportunity that could be availed of in the circumstances. In one of the rules framed by the Indian Industrial Conference it was laid down that it would ordinarily hold an annual session at the place where the Indian National Congress held its own, and on such days during the Christmas week, as might be fixed by its local reception committee in consultation with the reception committee of the National Congress. Each Conference session was also to be held in the Congress pavilion.²³

Intelligentsia

On the inability and failure of the feudal and bourgeois classes, as narrated above, to lead the public life and direct the newly emerging political consciousness into proper channels at its pioneering stage the field was left squarely open for the middle class intelligentsia to take its chance. And as it possessed leisure, ambition, keen intellectual vigour, broad outlook and receptivity it did play its role of leadership in public life to considerable extent. Being fully conversant with the knowledge of English it had the capacity to fulfil the requirements of the time, and if education had been speedily imparted all over India on a universal level, the intelligentsia might have acquired a very predominant

22. A. R. Desai, *Social Background of Indian Nationalism* (Bombay, Popular Book Depot, 1949, 2nd. ed.) p. 177.

23. *Report of the thirteenth Indian Industrial conference* held at Calcutta in December 1917 (Bombay 1918), p. 46.

position in channelizing and directing the public life of India. Nevertheless, despite its meagre numerical strength²⁴ it counted in influence much more than any other class.

It is interesting to trace briefly the evolution of the intelligentsia. The only areas of India which had been imparted modern education were the provinces of Bengal, Madras and Bombay. In the work of permanent settlement that followed after the defeat of the nationalists in 1857 these educated men found ample scope for their ambition. Persons who had acquired the knowledge of English were in a more advantageous position than those who had not. Besides, English-knowing persons were smaller in number in comparison than the posts needing such knowledge. The English-educated people were in great demand and got sumptuous salaries to make them happy as well as loyal to the British rule.²⁵ In due course the English-knowing Bengalees had their sway over a major part of Northern India, which was the major centre of the national liberation struggle in 1857. The Bengalee Baboos, called thus respectfully by the local inhabitants and contemptuously by the ruling authorities, helped in stabilizing the British system. They were the pioneers in every department of government activity and were sought for, both by the rulers and the ruled, for advice and guidance. The British official²⁶ also

24. By 1899, according to confidential government report, almost forty percent (5,442) of the 13,839 delegates to the Indian National Congress were from the legal professions. The other large groups consisted of 1,626 representing landed interests, and 2,091 from the commercial class. The remainder was constituted almost entirely of journalists, doctors, and teachers. The total strength of petty-bourgeois intelligentsia in 1886 was constituted of 300,000 in a population of 180,000,000. [Figures cited by Michael Edwards, *British India* (London, 1967), pp. 285-86]. Registered in 1901 census under the title of administrative personal and the professions were 7,000,000. Of this number, 3,400,000, or the majority of the intelligentsia, came under the category of professional people. [Figures cited by K. L. Datta, *Report on the Enquiry into the rise of price in India* (Calcutta, 1914) Vol. I, pp. 150-5.1]
25. It may be recalled that in 1908 there were some 1,250,000 Indians employed in the government offices and law courts of British India. [Valentine Chirol, *Indian unrest* (London 1910), p. 293.
26. The key and most highly salaried posts were held by 5,000 English men. [Ibid.]

realized their utility because they were useful, intelligent, shrewd, devoted to their assignment, and willing to work. They relieved their superior British officers of much of their mental work, and left them ample scope for playing, merry-making and resting. There is a substantial element of truth in the saying that many a British officer heading a particular department ruled the country with the brain of the "Bengalee Baboo." In the words of Lala Lajpat Rai, "the Bengalee Baboo worshiped the feringhee as *Mai Bap*." ²⁷

On this decisive importance of the intelligentsia Lala Lajpat Rai writes:

The reins of practical management were mostly in Bengalee hands whether it was a court of justice or a revenue commissioner's office or commissariat depot or an adjutant's camp or the department of land survey education. The heads of departments were always English, but the heads of ministerial establishments were generally Bengalees. The English could not do without them. The former did not know the language of the country, nor did they know the character of the people. The Bengalees were thus an absolute necessity. With the spread of a knowledge of the English language, the first generation of the English-knowing Indians in every province came to occupy an important position. While the old-fashioned Pandit or Moulvi solked, the English-knowing Hindu or Mohammedan basked in sunshine and flourished. ²⁸

Once this intelligentsia come to realize the importance of its indispensability in the framework of the political, legal and economic administration of the country it began to aspire for the summit of the particular administrative department which had so far been monopolized by the alien bureaucrats and wherefrom all the directives of power, guidance and rulings were issued. In this aspiration of the intelligentsia the alien bureaucrat saw a challenge to his own

27. Lajpat Rai, *Young India* (New York, B. W. Herebsch, 1919), pp. 109-10.

28. *Ibid.*, p. 112.

ruling position, from which he could not resile without jeopardizing his own political and economic security, and more than that his distinctive social status built up on the racial superiority complex. To safeguard his privileged status he evolved the odd philosophy of laying down that the coloured "Asiatic" began to deteriorate intellectually as well as physically on the attainment of puberty and adulthood. However, even if by chance there could be an exception to this dictum, an "Asiatic"—however advanced, superior and efficient he might be intellectually or physically—he could never attain a status of equality with a European by the law of nature. Thus, there arose a clash of interests. And the intelligentsia became aware of their inferior status forcibly imposed upon them by the crude realities of life in the framework of the socio-political organism. Lala Lajpat Rai summarizes this changed outlook:

Their ambition, however, soon met a check. They could equal the British in drinking and free-thinking, but they could not aspire to his position and place in the government of the country. Some of them decided to try this in the case of their sons. They sent them to England. A few passed the Indian Civil Service and the Indian Medical Service examinations, others became barristers. Both found out by bitter experience that, however able and clever they might be, whatever their intellectual acquirements, no matter if they were Christians, or semi-Christians, or free-thinkers, there was a limit to their aspirations both in service and out of it. That was the first eye-opener.²⁹

These Indian intellectuals also pointed out that where careers had been available to them in the liberal professions they had often achieved great distinction at the law courts, on the Bench, in literature. Besides, they had proved themselves competent and efficient enough to fill all the posts accessible to them in the Indian Civil Service. Without their help in the many subordinate departments the day-to-day work of administration could not have been completed for a

29. *Ibid.*, pp. 112-13.

single day. They also contended that they must, by intuition, be better decision-makers than foreigners, who were, after all "birds of passage", in regard to the requirements, privileges and desires of their own fellow countrymen. Furthermore, they were better interpreters to them of that much of Western ideas and culture as they could safely digest without losing their basic national characteristics. Still further, due to the absorption of their intellectual skill in administrative and political matters of the Government the Indian intellectuals filled the vacuum that existed between an English official and Indian masses both of whom could not come in direct contact due to the bar of a link language. They, therefore, were an indispensable link between a foreign ruler and their own illiterate and backward countrymen. They, thus, were no longer content with the minor positions which they had been occupying in the administrative apparatus. They claimed their country as their own and raised the slogan of "India for the Indians".

Against these forcibly imposed crude realities of life when this section of the intelligentsia resented and demanded the Indianization of the Civil Service or overlooked the orders and commands of the alien superiors or went to the extent of openly challenging their claims, the alien ruling agencies lost no time in suspending, dismissing or retiring some of them from their respective positions. Some of them were also rejected on the pretence of flaw in their preparations to the higher jobs of Civil Service.

Out of this crisis there arose a new class of intelligentsia, which became strongly anti-British, fully aware that their cherished aspirations would remain unfulfilled so long as there was alien domination in India. The people of this class started setting up their own socio-political organizations to further their claims in a mild tone, partly due to their financially weak position and, partly due to their imbibing of liberal culture of the West. It was their existence, more than anything else, that led to harshness and estrangement between Englishman and Indian. People like Surendra Nath Banerjee and Aurobindo Ghosh belonged to this category of the intelligentsia. Gradually they became the harbingers of the nationalist movement aiming at the establishment of self-rule in India.

Besides this category there was another section in this class, which had acquired its own independent source of livelihood. They also acquired modern education through the medium of English. Gradually, on the one hand, they also became aware and came to recognize the superiority and the advanced nature of the Western civilization and culture, and, on the other, of the fact that there was a good deal in their own social organism which needed reform. Instead of being swept away by the glare of the Western social organism like some people in their own class, they wanted to import their advanced knowledge in their own social set-up in order to redeem it from centuries long evils. Hence they set up new independent social and religious movements to achieve their objective. People like Raja Ram Mohan Roy, Vivekanand, Dadabhai Naoroji and Gokhale belonged to this category.

To these two categories of the intelligentsia one functioning in the political and economic field, the other acting in the socio-religious was added a third—the under-employed and the unemployed intelligentsia³⁰ at the beginning of the present century. Despite the apathetic attitude of the alien regime towards the popularization of the modern system of education on a universal level it spread considerably. But it was not paralleled by a proportional development of India which would have provided more employment. The disparity in these two specific fields culminated in the growth of chronic unemployment among the members of the educated classes. The serious proportions of unemployment in the educated youths endangered the security of livelihood of the intelligentsia, which plunged its youth into gloom often bordering on political discontent, frustration and despair. The economic sufferings of this section of the intelligentsia compelled it to join the movement of militant nationalism led by Bal,

30. It will not be out of context to point out that a large number of employed intellectuals were paid beggarly wages. A special study made by an Indian institute showed that 2,400 out of 3,054 college teachers earned under Rs. 30/- per month, or less than certain categories of workers. On the other hand, unemployment was the scourge of the Indian intelligentsia. In Bengal where the problem was acutely felt, there were approximately 40,000 unemployed professional people. [Valentine Chirol, *Indian Unrest*, n. 25, pp. 225-27.]

Pal and Lal—the famous trio. Some of them also joined the armed revolutionary movements. No wonder, many of them were moved by a genuine desire to broaden the sphere in the application of their energies and knowledge and to make themselves useful to their nation.

When these three sections of the intelligentsia met together they became a powerful force to guide the country. However, they suffered from one great limitation—their financially weak position. Dr. Beni Prasad points out this inherent weakness:

Economically, the intelligentsia represents a gradation of wealth and poverty and, in the absence of large-scale industrialisation concentrates on the public services and the learned professions. Hence it suffers from an internal contradiction; it depends for its livelihood on a system which it aspires to transform.³¹

This inherent weakness did not, however, deter the intelligentsia in advancing towards the goal of socio-politico-economic change. Being a highly advanced intellectual class it devised ways and means to achieve its objective. It sought the alliance of the financially privileged classes in India, namely, the capitalists and industrialists. To seek the co-operation of these privileged classes the intelligentsia began to advocate and enhance the cause of industrial development of India in the annual gatherings of their respective political organisations. It was brought to public notice by the intelligentsia that the indigenous industries in which a large number of people were employed before the introduction of the British regime were destroyed by the competition of the mechanised industries of Britain which dumped their goods into the Indian markets. The demand was also put forward that to meet its economic requirements India should adopt the policy of rapid industrialization and impart technical education in its universities and colleges. At the third annual session of the Indian National Congress held in Madras in December 1887 there was moved unanimously the following resolution:

31. Beni Prasad, n. 12, pp.43-4.

That having regard to the poverty of the people it is desirable that the Government be moved to elaborate a system of technical education, suitable for the condition of the country, to encourage indigenous manufactures by a more strict observance of the orders already existing in regard to utilizing such manufactures for state purposes, and to employ more extensively than at present the skill and talents of the people of the country.³²

Stressing the greater opportunities of employment to the people on the planning of industrialization, one of the delegates, Mr. Kashinath Triumbuck Khare stated in the same session:

These factories and workshops, gentlemen, when they spring up, will be a source of gaining an honest livelihood to thousands of our countrymen who now, destitute by any means, are driven to despair to keep body and soul together and, gentlemen, how welcome will be the day for India when, by the immense and growing development of her arts and industries, she will be able to find at least a wholesome morsel of food for her forty-five millions of completely destitute children, who are now, by official admission, going without even one single full meal a day.³³

The intelligentsia again brought the question of industrialization before the fourth session of the Congress held in 1888 when a resolution was passed stating that the Government be moved to delay no longer the appointment of a mixed commission to inquire into the present industrial condition of the country.³⁴

The agitation for industrialization of the country was intensively carried out in the successive period of 1905,

32. *Report of the Proceeding of the annual session of the Indian National Congress held in December, 1887*, p. 4.

33. *Ibid.*, p. 32.

34. *Report of the proceedings of annual session of the Indian National Congress held in December, 1888*, p. 5.

particularly after the Partition of Bengal and inauguration of Swadeshi programme. The spirit of Swadeshi was inculcated to get resultant strides in industrial progress. People were exhorted to impose upon themselves a special protective tariff by taking a vow to use Swadeshi goods in preference to foreign goods. Claims for industrial autonomy within the Empire were also persistently put forward.

With the beginning of World War I the intelligentsia pressed upon the alien regime the desirability and necessity of state aid for the growth of industries. They pointed out that no country in the world has thrived industrially until the state came to its rescue. The resolution unanimously passed at the annual session held in 1914 laid down:

In view of the present exceptional circumstances and in order to promote the material prosperity of the country, this Congress urges that immediate measures be taken by Government to organise and develop Indian industries.³⁵

Recalling the glorious past of India and lamenting her contemporary economic and industrial backwardness at the annual session of the Congress held in 1915 a delegate, R.N. Mudholkar stated:

The land which then thousands of years ago was famed as the *Swarna Bhumi* (the land of gold), as the land which possessed a soil the fertility of which was hardly equalled and nowhere surpassed, which possessed a variety of climate capable of furthering the production of all kinds of agricultural wealth, which possessed mineral resources of a very high degree, the land which attracted Alexander, the land which attracted Mahmud Gaznavi, Mohamed Ghori, and the Mughals, the land which in later times roused the cupidity even of Western Europe of taking away wealth from here to their own country, it would appear curious to them that land should now be considered as one of the poorest countries in

35. *Report of the proceedings of the annual session of the Indian National Congress held in December, 1914*, p. 145.

the world. Yet, it is a fact... Whenever there is a famine, hundreds and thousands die like flies.³⁶

Pointing out that all talk and demands for self-government, equal rights, privileges and adult franchise would remain simply political shibboleths so long as industrialization was not begun, another delegate, Sachindra Prasad emphasized in the same session:

We might talk glibly for political powers and privileges; we may demand enfranchisement and equal rights within the empire; we may dream of a free and federated India...; but all this talk and dream will end in mere illusion, if we cannot work out the economic and industrial freedom of our country... This resolution urges you to work and continue to work at a sacrifice for breaking the bondage of economic slavery of Mother India... Japan has already stolen a march upon us.³⁷

The demand of industrialization and the chronic poverty of India continued to be emphasized in the subsequent sessions of the Indian National Congress. In the 1918 session Mavji Govindji Seth lamneted:

We are more in an condition of a economic slavery than political slavery... They came as traders into this country, and they traded and traded and still they are trading upon our weaknesses, Had it been a national Government, had we been associated with the Government in the manner that we were associated with the Moghuls in the past, the poverty of India would not have existed to day... We have cried in season and out of season... (Our) cry was a cry in the wilderness.³⁸

The demand of industrialization meant a great financial gain to the capitalist class, and thereby the growth of a

36. *Report of the proceedings of the Congress session held in 1915*, p. 146.

37. *Ibid.*, pp. 96-7.

38. *Reoprt of the proceseedings of the annual session of the Indian National Congress held in 1918*, p. 127.

financially strong bourgeoisie. It also gave a great opportunity to the members of the intelligentsia to find employment in the newly growing industries from where they could be utilized as a great source of strength to the broader cause of the intelligentsia. Besides, they could also rely on the mercantile class during their political struggle against foreign rule.

Some of the politically conscious leaders of the intelligentsia also approached the feudal class to establish an alliance for the political advancement of India. But with certain exceptions like Rabindra Nath Tagore, who had enlightened themselves with modern requirements through the study of western culture and civilization, the latter class did not give a very favourable response. In an emergence of a powerful middle class intelligentsia the feudal class saw a great danger to the semblance of political power enjoyed by it in the imperial legislative councils, bestowed by the alien regime. Secondly, support to this class would also mean the antagonizing of the British regime which had devised and sustained the feudal class under the scheme of Permanent Settlement. The growth of the intelligentsia—especially of the nationalist-minded—appeared to the British regime a direct encroachment on its monopoly of political and financial power in India.

The apathetic attitude of the feudal class was perhaps a determining factor in transforming the politically conscious members of the intelligentsia into anti-feudalistic elements, and tempting them to find an ally in the peasantry. To weaken the strength of the feudal class and to seek the co-operation of the peasantry, the intelligentsia became not only supporters and organizers of the agitations launched by the peasants (like Champaran, Kheda movements) from the twentieth century onward, but also exposed the fallacies of the systematic exploitation of the peasantry under the system of landlordism. An appealing manifestation of this anti-feudalistic spirit appeared in the famous satirical novel, *Six Acres and Eight Decimals*, written by Fakir Mohan Senapati in Oriya language in 1902. Exposing the technique of economic exploitation the author sarcastically characterized Mang Raj, the zemindar's *Karinda* who was always keen to deprive the tenants like Shyam of their legitimate

dues. The tricks he played comprised not only the ignorance of the peasantry but also the use of force. "The *Malik* (Owner) did not distinguish", as it is put ironically, "between his arable lands and those owned by the tenants... He fixes his eyes (with a view to snatch them) on the land of others with as much a greedy look and a devoted care with which he cultivates his own lands."³⁹

Moreover, the theme of the entire novel rotates round the personalities of Bhagiya and Sariya of the weaver's family. who were dishonestly and shrewdly manipulated by the landlord's greedy *Karinda*, Ram Chandra Mang Raj with the assistance of the temple priest to snatch away their tiny fertile plot of six *bighas*.

The anti-feudalistic sentiment of the intelligentsia also manifested in exposing the anti-nationalist role of landlords in acquiring big *zemindaris* without being well-educated in modern schools and colleges and thus enjoying unlimited privileges. We come across this feeling of the intelligentsia in the following extract of Fakir Mohan Senapati:

हाय-हाय, मियाँजी उलटी कलम से
हूँ छा नाम लिखकर ही जमींदार हो
गये और हम हैं कि सीधा कलम
से लम्बे-लम्बे "ऐसे" लिखकर
भी रोटी तक नहीं जुटा पाते।⁴⁰

Being considerably free from financial liabilities, supported as they were by the trading and industrial bourgeoisie, the nationalist-minded intelligentsia diverted their attention to transforming the socio-political system which had blocked the fulfilment of their aspirations for political and economic power. Appraising their constructive role Moulana Mahamad Ali wrote:

Never has a young generation of people set itself to bear the titanic burden of a complete social recons-

39. Fakir Mohan Senapati, translated into English from Hindi translation *Chhaman Athaguntha* (New Delhi, Sahitaya Akadami, 1959), p. 15.

40. Ibid., pp. 36-7.

truction with deeper searching of the heart, greater earnestness and more reverent faith in the power that shapes human ends than the "educated classes" of India.... They stand in the midst of a vast process of change and destruction, in which ancient cultures and hoary institutions are silently crumbling away at the touch of the new iconoclastic forces.... Older generation... stands dumb and paralysed as if with a sense of doom, the present stares at them as one huge note of interrogation. Only the horizons of the future are lit with hope and trailing clouds of glory. The young Indian who loves country... should still be struggling manfully to construct a new life—purpose out of the debris of the old.... The young educated Indian... carries within his bosom the pathos of a great but fallen race.⁴¹

Among the intellectuals the new dynamic forces which had been attracting the young men towards the slogan of *Swaraj* raised by Tilak and being used as the guiding line for national unity and liberation, had derived much of their inspiration from class books prescribed in their curriculum. They made them learn how significant a role nationalism had played in freeing modern nations from alien domination and in determining the entire political growth of Europe. It had liberated the Balkan States from the alien thralldom of the autocratic Ottoman Sultans; it had assisted the process of national unification in Italy and Germany; it had been an important instrument in welding the British people into a mighty Empire. Had not the people of India also a common nationhood in spite of religious and social differences? Above all, they were extremely jubilant when they read the news of the defeat of Czarist Russia at the hands of Japan. Their minds went back to the Biblical anecdotes and episodes like the one when little but spirited and strongwilled David had conquered the unvanquishable giant, Goliath. Influenced thus they began to agitate for freedom of the country from British domination in a new form. No longer they believed in the time-honoured practice of supplications, petitions and profound prostrations, passing resolutions,

41. Afzal Iqbal ed., *Select Writings and Speeches of Maulana Mohamad Ali* (Lahore, Sheikh Muhammed Ashraf, 1944), p. 140.

leading deputations and such other techniques of "loyalist" agitations. "This new form became so powerful", writes Namaboodiripad, "in rallying the people against the British regime as to throw the rulers into utter panic."⁴²

This struggle was led, of course, by the intelligentsia due to its political and cultural advancement. And as a cohesive force emerging out of the common alliance of classes and masses from 1905 onwards when Swadeshi Movement was launched, they raised the demand of self-rule and thus provided the ideological base of nationalism to the whole movement. In spite of its compromising nature, the Indian bourgeoisie also supported the demand of self-rule. Speaking on behalf of the mercantile community a delegate to the annual session of the Indian National Congress held at Delhi in December 1917, stated emphatically:

I...wish to add on behalf of my community, that we are strongly in favour of representative form of Government. The charge generally laid against us by Anglo-Indian Press and Anglo-Indian merchants is that the cry of self-government is only confined to vakils and lawyers. I will, if I am permitted to say—I will speak on behalf of the Indian mercantile community of Bombay and say that we, as a community, are quite alive to the cry that has been raised in this country and that we are determined to do all we can for the realisation of the great hope that lies before us. If you want any proof of the mercantile community's association with this new movement that is going on in India, I will point to the activities of gentlemen like Mr. Govind Lal Shivilal and Mr. Jamunadas Dwarkadas who are all pillars of the mercantile community of Bombay.⁴³

The healthy hostility against British domination could, however, develop only on a limited rationalist or materialist philosophical basis. It could grow only as a minority philo-

42. E. M. S. Namboodiripad, *the Mahatma and the Ism*, (Delhi, People's Publishing House, 1958), p. 17.

43. *Report of the annual session of the Indian National Congress held in 1917*, p. 114.

sophical current. Instead of limiting itself to economic and political control by an alien regime, this hostility extended to whatever appeared to be alien. An antagonistic approach was adopted not only to foreign domination but also to the culture of the alien ruler. It is to be remembered that the rationalist and materialist culture grew in West as a cultural weapon of the Western bourgeoisie in its struggle against an outmoded feudalism that had lost its utility to the progress of Western society. It was built by the intellectual leaders of the bourgeoisie. It should not be forgotten that the bourgeois rationalist and materialist culture was higher than the preceding culture of the landlord class. This was the remarkable contribution of the advanced West European capitalists of the rising phase of capitalism to the cultural progress of mankind.

The intellectual vanguards of the Indian *bourgeoisie* like Lokmanya Tilak, Bipin Chandra Pal, Aurobindo Ghosh, and others wrongly identified and confused the domination of India by a capitalist alien nation like the Great Britain with the bourgeois culture of the latter which was, from the historical standpoint, higher than the then prevailing feudal Indian culture. They not only denounced British control but also Western culture, which possessed within it valuable scientific forces. They thus launched a crusade not only against the alien domination but also against the superior cultural progress of the aliens.

This antagonism to the alien domination, culminating in unappraised, uncritical indifference to the rationalist and materialist culture of the West, was nourished on the preachings of militant leaders like Bal, Pal, Ghosh and others. They encouraged an influential section of intellectuals to idealize the unsuitable culture of India of antiquity i. e. pre-modern India. They integrated the militant struggles of the common people with an obscurantist ideology. What is worse, at the very time when they were leading these struggles, one finds them taking these very obscurantist ideas to the common masses.⁴⁴ This section of nationalists dreamt of a

44. It will not be out of context to point out here that what the militant nationalists were doing in India. Gandhiji was doing somewhat similar thing in South Africa, viz, showing a complete indifference, if not hatred, for the radical rationalist ideology of the progressive west of those days. There was nothing wrong in his leading the

modified resuscitation of ancient Indian culture, its present century edition. This parting away from the rationalist and materialist outlook of the Europe, just because it was developed and grown by a nation which had politically and economically controlled the country of Indians, was one of the basic factors to be kept in consideration when one reviews the situation which retarded the spread of historically higher culture among the nationalist-minded intellectuals. This was the error of confounding the domination of the country by a European nation with the materialist culture which developed in Europe. Secondly, in order to keep the masses submerged in ignorance about their material interests the Indian bourgeoisie felt the basic necessity of maintaining religion as a spiritual prop of the bourgeois system. They, therefore, did not dare to adopt materialism in a substantial way as an ideological technique against imperialism. Commenting on the growth of this retrogressive phenomenon an eminent Indian scholar of Marxism, C. G. Shah, wrote some time ago:

...The Indian nationalist, instead of assimilating that culture and using it as a weapon against the reactionary ideological inheritance in the form of a mass of mind-deadening superstitions and religious mysticism, actually revelled in day dreams of resurrecting the culture of India's hoary past. He became a national chauvinist in the cultural field declaring that the

poor Indian indentures there, but he combined the struggle with an utterly reactionary and obscurantist ideology unlike Lenin, his contemporary, who integrated the militant mass movement of the world proletariat with the most progressive ideology of his times i.e. socialism. Take, for illustration, the way in which he formulated his approach towards the modern world in his pamphlet *Hind Swaraj* or Indian Home Rule, written in 1909. As an important and sympathetic historian of Gandhiji's political and social activities and writing, D.G. Tendulkar summed up that the pamphlet was a severe condemnation of "modern civilization." Gandhiji personally summarized the contents of the pamphlet in a letter to a friend, "If British rule were replaced tomorrow by Indian rule based on modern methods, India would be no better off....India's salvation consists in unlearning what she has learnt during the past fifty years or so." [Full text quoted by D. G. Tendulkar, *Mahatma* (Bombay, 1952) ,Vol. I., p. 130].

Indian people, armed with the inherited spiritual culture (the religio-mystical culture), the product of their backward feudal phase of existence, will be the cultural leader of contemporary humanity.⁴⁵

The attempt by militant nationalists to turn the whole of India into almost an invulnerable fortress of religio-mystical and obscurantist ideologies inherited from her medieval feudal past was one of the factors which paved the way for the Surat Split in 1907. The national body of the Congress was divided into Extremist and Moderate groups. It is undeniable that the latter were opposed to the revival of feudal culture. Religious nationalism, therefore, had little appeal for them. But under the pressures of the Extremists, the fortunes of the Moderates suffered a continuous downward trend. Moreover, their constitutional and peaceful agitation was intermittently rebuffed by the alien regime. Their tragedies were the "depth of their Westernization and their trust in British good faith."⁴⁶ It was not their concern whether the alien regime was morally good or bad; they were interested only with the fact that it was there depriving intellectuals of their rightful employment and gains. Moreover they were distrusted by the adherents of religious nationalism.

Religious nationalism, on the other hand, was to have its appeal to the newly growing but partly-westernized lower middle class. It was on these persons that westernization had a destructive impact. Being inadequately brought up in an alien cultural tradition, they found themselves uneasy in their own. They became afraid of western-style political institutions and saw no merits to be gained for themselves in the representative form of government, which they anticipated would favour the fully westernized bourgeois class rather than themselves. Religious nationalism, therefore, offered the unemployed lower middle class intellectuals an outlet for their economic frustration and despair as well a firm safety-valve within the traditional social framework from which their newly acquired modern education had appeared to cut

45. C. G. Shah, *Marxism, Gandhism, Stalinism* (Bombay, Popular Book Prakashan, 1963), pp. 138-39.

46. Comment by Michael Edwardes, *British India* (London, Sidgwick & Jackson, 1967), p. 287.

them loose. And to young hot-heads it provided the excitement to commit violence, of deeds rather than words.

On the other hand, the Moderates believed implicitly in gradual reform and in co-operation rather than revolution. In 1905, Gokhale established the Servants of India Society. "Its members", he said, "frankly accept the British connection, as ordained, in the inscrutable dispensation of Providence, for India's good. Self-government on the lines of English colonies is their goal. This goal, they recognise, cannot be attained without years of earnest and patient work and sacrifices worthy of the cause."⁴⁷ These men all believed in service and in the working out of the pattern of British rule—through education and the assimilation of ideas of self-government.

They were, however, engulfed by frustration, a reaction to their fundamental ineffectiveness. Due to the inherent nature of foreign imperialism it was difficult for the British to respond to them. If they had, the history of India in the twentieth century would have been quite different. But they did not. The concessions demanded quietly and temperately by the Moderates were given to others, and under duress. Some historians have seen in the democratic framework of independent India the triumph of the liberal-bourgeois democracy, but this may not be the verdict of the future. Their ideas certainly did influence many a man who laid the foundations of free India.

In the formative years of the twentieth century the divorce of the Moderate leaders from the trend of the times had become almost absolute. Their moderate demands impressed neither the British regime nor other nationalist organizations. In the emotional excitement of Hindu revivalism, secret societies, and growing economic frustration, their ideas appeared spiritless and futile.

The British Government decided to divide the vast province of Bengal in 1905. This move appealed to the Government on other grounds than purely administrative ones. Lord Curzon—who viewed the matter purely in terms

47. *Speeches of Gopal Krishna Gokhale* (Madras, 1920), p. 183.

of efficiency—did not consider Indian responses significant, primarily because he did not believe that Indian nationalism posed any real threat to the continuation of the British. Others, less Olympian, thought otherwise. The Lieutenant-Governor of Bengal thought partition would be a blow to Bengali nationalists. He was correct, and when partition was announced militant nationalists recognized that there was a situation which could be emotionally exploited, to give a boost to their agitation and the Moderates, fearful of being left behind, joined in. Here at least was a great and specific issue which could give unity of purpose to all sections of the nationalist movement.

Two techniques were to be applied to make the campaign a success, terrorism and economic boycott. The boycott began in August 1904. It was widely supported, particularly by the Indian bourgeoisie, and the use of homespun cloth became one of the manifestations of the national liberation struggle. For his comments in the *Kesari*, Tilak—who had been active again after his release from prison—was sentenced to six years' imprisonment and exiled to Mandalay on a charge of incitement to murder.

Militant ideas had, in fact, captured the Congress. At the meeting at Benaras in 1905, Tilak, Lala Lajpat Rai (1865-1928), who led the Punjab delegation, and Bipin Chandra Pal (1858-1932), who headed the delegation from Bengal, jointly expressed the mood of impatience. But the extremists were unable to take over actual control of Congress, partly because of Dadabhai Naoroji, who was brought in for the 1906 session to conciliate the warring factions. The Moderates officially accepted most of the Extremist programmes but expressed them in soft language.

Reactionary Intelligentsia

Within the intelligentsia there also existed a certain section which retarded the process of national regeneration by building up a number of communal organisations like the Hindu Conference, the Muslim League, the All India Christian Conference, the Anglo-Indian Empire League and others. However, these retrogressive tendencies were not confined to merely the establishment of separate

organisations on religious basis. The intelligentsia of these various religious communities was further subdivided into various caste, community and sectarian organisations like the Rajput Mahasabha, the Rajput Conference, the All India Khatri Conference, the Bhatia Conference, the Kayastha Conference, the Kshatrya Conference, the Non-Brahmin Confederation, the Maithil Society, the Mahratta Educational Conference, the All-India Mohamedan Educational Conference and others. Each of these organisations met separately every year with the object of welding together the people of their own caste, sect and group, residing in different provinces into one community.

Some of these sectional organisations were strong supporters of communal representation. In its fifth session held at Nagpur on 28 December, 1918 the All-India Christian Conference pleaded like the Muslim League for providing separate representation for Indian Christians.⁴⁸

This (anti-national) section of the intelligentsia, patronised by a section of the upper classes, endeavoured to keep alive the traditionally existing mutual distrust and lack of faith among religio-social communities. Their main aim was the attainment of their own sectional privileges as far as jobs in the administrative apparatus or reservation of representation in the legislative bodies or competition in the sphere of commerce were concerned. The socio-cultural backwardness of the masses assisted such communalists and sectarians to keep themselves engaged in their anti-national task.

Each of these sectarian organizations recited the past glories of their respective communities and eulogized the historical figures though those ancestors perhaps would have never thought on those lines. This glorification confined the achievements of the ancestors as particularly the glories of a particular community or sect and antagonised other communities and led them away from recognizing the achievement of the ancestors as a common inheritance of the people all over the country. To counteract this impact the other communities or sects not only discarded those ancestors but

48. Summary Report of the proceedings of the Sessions published in the *Indian Review* (Madras, 1919), Vol. XX, p. 15.

discovered, and sometimes artificially, superficially, unhistorically their own heroes and heroines, saints and emperors and put them on higher pedestals than those assigned to others or they actually deserved in the making of history. Recalling the glories of Agra City in the Mughal days in the 27th session of the Mohamedan Educational Conference held in December 1913, Mr. Justice Shah Din ended his address with the following peroration:

Indian Mahomedans...the very ground on which you are treading must recall to your minds the stirring memories of a heroic age, when your co-religionists bore with admirable fortitude the heat and burden of the day, and with patient labour, unflinching resolution and indomitable courage developed the arts of war and peace and maintained for along time a high standard of civic life. ⁴⁹

Secondly, these sectarian organizations felt closer to the alien regime than to the forces of national regeneration like the Indian National Congress. Presiding over the All-India Kayastha Conference held at Calcutta in December 1912, Mr. Baldeo Prasad stated that "the British Government was sent by Providence for the salvation of India; for it was the British Government that had awakened them to their self-consciousness. He was sure that their community was destined to fulfil great deeds in future and that could only be achieved by the combined efforts of the Kayasthas of all India." ⁵⁰

In his reception address delivered at the twentieth session of the Rajput Conference held in 1916, the Maharaja of Dumraon attributed the loyalty of the community to the alien regime in the following words:

The war has...given...the Kshattriyas in particular one more occasion to manifest their innate and enthusiastic loyalty to the person and throne of the

49. Summary Report of the proceedings of the meeting published in the *Indian Review* (Madras, 1915), Vol. XV, p. 48.

50. Summary Report of the proceedings of the meeting published in the *Indian Review* (Madras, 1913), Vol. XIV, p. 55.

king-emperor. I, therefore, fervently appeal to the Rajputs of Behar to offer themselves in large numbers for enlistment in His Majesty's army. I also appeal to the Government to give the Beharee Rajputs of greater facilities in enlistment.⁵¹

In the course of his address delivered in the annual session of the All-India Khatri Conference held at Lucknow in 1916 Dewan Amar Nath recalled the military glory of the ancient Khatri and urged the Government to allow his compatriots the privilege of service and sacrifice in the cause of the Empire.⁵² As late as 1917 the president of the eleventh session of the Mahratta Educational Conference believed that Indians were not fit for self-rule. He, perhaps, surpassed others when he advised his followers to remain loyal to the alien regime. He stated:

The present war has given us an opportunity of serving the Empire. Such an opportunity has never come before and may not come again...I consider it to be our sacred duty to rise to the occasion and to act in a manner worthy of our military traditions. If we fail we have to mourn the day for ever.⁵³

Most of these sectional organisations were patronized by the Maharajas and Thakurs, the feudal lords and Diwans and Lalas and Raizadas.

51. Summary Report of the proceeding of the Conference published in *Indian Review* (Madras, 1917), Vol. XVIII, p. 21.

52. *Ibid.*, p. 42.

53. Summary Report of the proceedings of the eleventh session published in the *Indian Review* (Madras, 1918), Vol. XIX, p. 62.

B—Revolutionary Movement

"You, young man who is going to cross this threshold, do you know what awaits you?"

"I know."

"Cold, hunger, hostility, contempt, irony, shame, prison, disease, and death."

"I know, I am ready to endure all this."

"Even if all this were to come not only from your enemies, but also from your relatives and friends?"

"Yes, even then."

"Have you considered that you might be subject to a delusion, that you might find you have sacrificed your young life in vain?"

"I have considered this too."

"Enter then."

"'Imbecile!' said someone."

"'Saint!' the echo answered."

[Ivan Turgenev, Prose Poems (in Russian); a collection of writings (Moscow, Children Publishing House, 1967 ed.), p. 38].

Terrorism manifested in the formation of secret societies among youth in a number of provinces. "Bombs-throwers and political assassins became popular heroes and their funeral scenes of hysterical emotion."¹ The

1. Michael Edwardes, *British India* (London, Sidgwick & Jackson, 1967), p. 288.

patriotic spirit of the young revolutionaries was also reflected in the composition of many inspiring songs during their revolutionary career. Their contents manifested their faith in national regeneration. A few specimen are quoted below:

We cared not, nor had the mettle too, when we
launched ourselves into the valley of penury. Though
to a distance drew the love of Motherland to pat us.

No care for the self flashes into our minds, but it
occurs; Till how far the Motherland will lay in the
siege of decline;

It torments to see our nation in that state; We long
to die and vanish in the dust. ²

Revolutionary patriotism was so intensive that some passionate pieces of prose were also written. The revolutionaries were interpreted to have said to their country: "To the last breath of our lives, to the last child of our mothers, to the last stone of our dwellings, all is thine. Make no hurry, choose Thine own time to strike. If thou needest months, we will fight for months, if though needest years, we will fight for years. The children of today shall be the soldiers of tomorrow... Accept the gift I make thee of my strength, my hopes, my joys, and my sorrows, of all my being filled with the passion of thee. Pardon Thy children, their errors of past days. Cover them with Thy glory, put them to sleep in Thy flag. Rise Victorious and renewed upon their graves. Let our holocaust save Thee. *Bande Matram*." ³

Attempts were also made to instil the spirit into Indians abroad in order to overthrow British Imperialism in India. Young brilliant enthusiasts like Hardayal wandered in various parts of the globe, called meetings and made "seditious" speeches inflaming the minds of their countrymen in America and Canada. It was also resolved to collect

2. Banarsi Das Chaturvedi, ed. by, *Ram Prasad 'Bismil'* (Delhi, Atma Ram & Sons, 1958), p. 147.

3. An extract from the introductory note by H. P. Ghose; I. G. Ohsawa, *The Two Great Indians in Japan: Sri Rash Behari Bose & Netaji Subhas Chandra Bose* (Calcutta, 1954), Vol. I, p. 9.

subscriptions and to start journals like the *Ghadar* to popularize the revolution. The press where such journals were to be printed were to be given dynamically appealing names like the *Jugantar Ashram* or "Hermitage of the New Era." The papers were frankly revolutionary and they urged preparations for national upsurge and the freedom of India by the expulsion of the *firringhi* (English). For instance, in one of its issues published during World War I the *Ghadar* exhorted:

This is the time to prepare yourselves for mutiny while this war is raging in Europe. Oh, brave people! Hurry up and stop all these taxes by mutinying. "Wanted:—Brave soldiers to stir up *Ghadar* in India. Pay-death; prize—martyrdom; pension—liberty; field of battle—India." ⁴

And innumerable young men did sacrifice themselves to make their Motherland free. In the course of their patriotic performance they met their financial requirements by forcibly taking away money from the rich. The alien regime used all its propaganda resources to discredit their action as political dacoity. No genuine lover of his country can, however, doubt the sincerity and honesty of their purpose. An interesting case is worth quoting here to illustrate the standpoint. Somewhere in the middle of 1916 the young revolutionaries of Bengal forcibly took away some cash from the house of one Babu Upendre Mohan Ray Chaudhuri, the victim of the dacoity. Later on he received a letter purporting to come from the Financial Secretary for independent United India, Bengal Branch. It was probably a genuine communication from the revolutionary party. The following is a translation:

Bande Matram,

Sir,

With due respect the following is said:

Six of our Honorary officers employed in the Department for collection of revenue for the fulfil-

4. *Sedition Committee Report 1918*, (Calcutta, Government Printing, Press 1918), p. 168.

ment of our noble cause have deposited with us the sum of Rs. 9,891-1-3 obtained from you. This amount has been credited to your name in our books as deposit with interest at the rate of Rs. 5 annually.

When please God, our aim is fulfilled, the whole amount will be repaid with interest in one instalment. The kindness shown by you to our officers is what was to be expected from a good man like you. I hope our officers also behaved towards you in the same manner.

According to our directions they did not touch any ornaments mortgaged with you. While checking the money received from you we noticed a locket and an armlet. We learn from our confidential informer that these two articles form part of the property mortgaged with you. At a meeting held on the night of 13th Ashar our committee directed the return of these articles. We, therefore, inform you that they will be returned to you within a week. But if this becomes known to the greedy police, they are sure to misappropriate the articles, so we warn you beforehand. If you, Sir, by acts or deeds, do anything against us or make over anyone to the police on suspicion then we will not be able to stick to our former promise. We will not leave anyone in your family to enjoy your enormous wealth.

Probably it is not unknown to you that our United India Government has never hesitated to punish those police officers who have stood in the way of our carrying out our good ideas. And the foreign British Government have not been able to save them in spite of all their attempts. So we remind you not to act against us and thus compel us to shed the blood of our countrymen and wash the mother-country with the same.

Intelligence (sic) people like you certainly understand clearly that to free one's country from the grips of the foreigners requires the sacrifice of self or money and help from one's countrymen.

If the intelligent rich people of our country would realise the importance of our mission and for the sake of raising India to her former position in regard to religion and prestige would promise to contribute something monthly, quarterly or six-monthly, then we would not trouble them as we have done. If they do not consent to this arrangement we shall have to collect money in this way.

Sir, will the rich people of the country be backward in assisting those who have become resolute with the new fire of patriotism and commenced a big sacrifice to free the country from subjugation?

The prosperity and sovereignty of Japan is due to the sacrifice of money, etc., by the rich Japanese.

We pray to the Almighty that he may give strength and good-will to the hearts of our countrymen to carry on the noble work.

Sd/ J. Balamanta
Financial Secretary for the
Independent United India,
Bengal Branch.

Calcutta

Dated 14th Ashar 1323. ⁵

Limitations of the Movement

The revolutionary movement was handicapped by some drawbacks. Complete secrecy was maintained, so much so that participants did not know even the real names of one another. In these circumstances there was bound to arise suspicion and lack of confidence, culminating often in jealousy and bickering among the members. Due to the mutual suspicion and personal jealousy between Yashpal and Sukhdev Raj and Dhanvantri there arose a serious controversy in the Central Committee of HSRA in 1930 over the

5. Home (Pol.) Deposit, Government of India, July 1916, No. 441-45, pp .18-9,

marriage of Yashpal with Prakashvati. The suspicion and jealousy reached its climax when the Central Committee decided to assassinate Yashpal by shooting. The decision was leaked out to Yashpal by Virbhadra, who was one of its members. The disclosing of this secret was considered a violation of the secret code and Azad ultimately suspended the HSRA. Similar was the case of the secret societies in Bengal. In his novel "*Goura*" Rabindra Nath Tagore has illustrated the weaknesses of the secret societies with remarkable lucidity. There were also the chances of the growth of *dadagiri* or despotism, which often culminated in the development of suspicion among the followers towards the leaders. As in modern art, so in that kind of infantile politics *dadaism* was an irrational cult. There was affection adulterated with adulation, jealousy sugar-coated with saintliness, and loyalty buttressed upon indiscriminate adoration of the hero-worshipper. Both M.N. Roy and Sukhdev Raj give a thorough and real account of this aspect in their writings like *Men I Met* (p.1) and *Jab Jyoti Jagi* (pp.44-46,61) published recently.

These revolutionaries, besides producing an environment of suspicion, failed to change their techniques with the progress of time. Many of those who were working in European countries looked with suspicion on all new-comers. Persons like Shyamaji Krishnavarma "did not fit in with the present, and the world passed him by ignoring him."⁶ There was still another revolutionary, namely, Raja Mahendra Pratap, who till recently was a member of the Indian Parliament. He was considered to be "living completely in the air",⁷ and refusing to have anything to do with realities. It was difficult to take him seriously. He appeared to be a character out of a medieval romance, a *Don Quixote* who had strayed into the twentieth century.⁸ From a close study of his memoirs one gathers the impression that during most of his time abroad he was crossing the boundaries of the various countries as rapidly as if he was on a whirlwind tour of the

6. Jawaharlal Nehru, *An Autobiography* (London, John Lane the Bodley Head, 1936), p. 150.

7. *Ibid.*, 150-51.

8. *Ibid.*

world. He spent an unnecessary amount of his time in seeing the beauty of nature, the architecture of the buildings, enjoying delicious diplomatic luncheon and dinner parties with the Kaiser of Germany, King of Afghanistan and similar other foreign dignitaries and having his photos taken and published in the foreign press. Though he felt a sincere urge for independence, his feudal origin prohibited him in organizing the men of common stock into a revolutionary army. Though revolutionary he talked much of the religion of love. On his being presented to Lenin in those revolutionary days he talked more of the religion of love than of the political means to be used for liberating the country. He appeared to be obsessed with the belief that he was a prophet. To Lenin he appeared to be much more of a Tolstoyist than a revolutionary. Lenin advised him that religion would not save the Indian people. Tolstoy and others like him had tried the same thing in Russia but failed. If, however, he adhered to his philosophy let him go to England and preach his gospel there. In addition he remarked that the Bolsheviks did not believe in God; they would listen to the admonition of the prophet only when the latter had accomplished in his country what they had done in theirs.⁹ At the end Lenin advised him to go back to India and preach class-struggle and "the road to freedom of India will be nearer."¹⁰ Similarly Maulvi Obeidulla whom Jawaharlal Nehru met in Italy, appeared to be keeping alive an ability for old-style political manoeuvring. He was not in touch with modern ideas.¹¹ Then there was Lala Hardayal. Though intellectually he was by far the superior, even if emotional and erratic politically. Soon after his arrival in Berlin he clashed with Virendranath Chattopadhyaya over the question of leadership. The Germans backed the latter and brought him out at the top. Hardayal was arrested and interned as an enemy alien. On the defeat of Germany he escaped to Sweden, wrote a sensational pamphlet *Forty-four Months in Germany and Turkey*. He underwent a sort of somersault with regard to his views. He gave out that violence could have no place in politics. Not

9. M. N. Roy claimed to have a first hand report from Lenin of this interview, see *Radical Humanist* (Calcutta), Vol. XVIII, p. 535.

10. Anand Gupta, *India and Lenin* (Delhi, New Publishers, 1954), p. 33.

11. Jawaharlal Nehru, n. 6, p. 151.

only that he went a step further and ran down the Germans. The most important part of the booklet was a passionate declaration of loyalty to Britain. Far from being an ardent revolutionary he appeared now to be an apologist of British domination over India and advocated Dominion Status as against Complete Independence. He also called upon the revolutionaries to cooperate with England, and attain *swaraj* under its aegis. He really wrote something which, though true, was a strange coming from a revolutionary nationalist. Pointing out the fact that the participants in the movement of national emancipation had learnt their political lesson from Britain, Hardayal made the declaration, "If India was the mother, Britain was the grandmother."¹² One could easily guess that it was yet further evidence of Hardayal's political instability. For one who had acquired a legendary popularity as an uncompromising revolutionary nationalist it showed a lack of moral courage and it cost Hardayal his popularity. It scandalized the Indian nationalists, especially his revolutionary colleagues. It is alleged that he had written the booklet with the motive of obtaining the permission of the British Government to return to England and subsequently to India. Evidently he did not obtain such a permission, although through a general amnesty made for political prisoners he was at last allowed to visit India. Despite his remarkable personality he thus appeared a misfit in politics. Another important revolutionary was Bhupendra Nath Dutta, the brother of Swami Vivekananda. On his release from jail he left India and reached Berlin. To some of his colleagues there he appeared to be disappointingly a sort of Rip Van Winkle.

There was still another political limitation of the revolutionary movement. Instead of relying on their own political strength some of the revolutionaries in foreign countries looked towards and even sought aid from foreign governments like that of Germany. The latter appeared to be bargaining with them for their own political and material

12. Remarks quoted in "M. N. Roy's Memoirs", *The Radical Humanist* (Calcutta), Vol. XVIII, 6 June, 1954, p. 271. For further study see also Dharmavira, *Lala Hari Dayal and Revolutionary Movements of His Times* (New Delhi, Indian Book co. 1970), p. 281; V.D. Savarkar, *The Story of my Transportation for life* (Bombay, 1950), pp. 418-19.

gains rather than really caring for the interests of India. Though it was not an insignificant achievement on the part of the Berlin Indian Revolutionary Committee to have acquired in Germany the status of the representative of a belligerent power, so as to obtain the support of Berlin Government for the national struggle against British domination, its very belief that it was recognized as a provisional government in exile was sheer illusion due to the deceptiveness of the German propaganda department. All this created an atmosphere of unreality. The Committee was totally isolated from India, and could do little in the west to promote the cause of Indian nationalism. The Germans used it for publicity purposes. Some of its members were also despatched to Turkey with the purpose of inciting the Indian troops in Mesopotamia to revolt against the British. But there was hardly any response to their exhortations. Their failure was due not so much to the loyalty of the Indian soldiers as to the ineffectiveness of the propaganda. Anyway, there took place no upsurge of Indian troops. Doomed to isolation and inaction by the evidence of its very composition and existence, the Berlin Committee very soon was disintegrated by internal feuds as a result of the mutual jealousies of its leaders.¹³

There were persons who cursed destiny that had not still decided in favour of overthrowing British rule in India. They, however, easily overlooked that indiscipline, errors which had looked to be tiny, inadvertent slackness, soft human emotions, uncalled for zeal and unguarded whispers which exposed the secrecy of the movement, brought about calamity and defeat of the mighty struggle. Treachery, defeat and shame were greatly felt by the whole country. Correctly remarked a participant in the movement, Hardas: "The sufferings and sacrifices of years and the flower of Indian humanity laid at the altar were all in vains. The Mother was still in chains! All the lessons of failures since 1857 did not make the sentimental freedom-fighters a bit wiser."¹⁴

13. For further details see "M. N. Roy's Memoirs," *The Radical Humanist* (Calcutta) Vol. XVIII, 13 June 1954, pp. 282-83 & 294-95.

See also Dharmavira, *Lala Hari Dayal*, n. 12, p. 232-33.

14. Balshastri Hardas, *Armed Struggle*, p. 278.

Due to the careless gossiping of the enthusiastic Sikhs who came in their thousands from the United States of America, the secrecy of all the schemes of actions used to fall in the hands of imperialist intelligence department long before the landing of the bands of the revolutionaries on the Indian coasts. The alert British secret service simply waited at the Indian ports the arrival of the ships to get hold over all the revolutionary literature, to confiscate the chests of arms and ammunitions¹⁵ and thereby increase their own stocks, to seize the huge funds sent by comrades and foreign sympathizers among whom there were foreign regimes also, and enrich their treasury, and finally, to catch by the neck the heads of planned insurrections and throw them into jails or exile them to the black waters of Andamans or to hang them. At the time of organizing the *Ghadar* in 1914 Lala Har Dayal and his comrades had sent books, pamphlets, arms, money and men, but unluckily nothing reached the headquarters of the revolutionaries. Poor Rash Behari Bose waited in vain. The Revolutionaries in Berlin knew that all the arrangements had been made well at their end, but were indeed disappointed to see no results at the other end. There was no news of insurrection or the utilization of what had been despatched. The leaders outside India did not know what had taken place inside the country. What they found was that the expected attainments had not been forthcoming. But they could not find the reasons. Although to some extent the Germans were sympathetic, but when they learnt that nothing tangible or conducive to their own motive had resulted, they also began to entertain doubts. The Kaiser was obviously angry. His anxiety and irritation climaxed towards the close of the War

15. Among those who arranged the smuggling of arms to India was also M. N. Roy. Assuming the pseudonym of Martin he sent to Amarendra Chatterji in Calcutta 129 automatic pistols and 20,830 cartridges through two Chinese friends. Though these things never reached the proper person, Avani Mukherjee was searched by the police who got the addresses of the two Chinese from whom they recovered the pistols and cartridges. Later on M. N. Roy sent three ships (one was *H. M. S. Cornwall*) which carried a huge stock of arms and ammunitions. One was sunk by a British man-of-war near the Andamans and the second was seized by the Dutch Government under the maritime laws. About the third nothing was known. [Dharma Vira, *Lala Har Dayal*. n. 12, p. 234. See also B.N. Agarwala, *Viplav Yagya Ki Aahutiyan* (Mirzapore, 1970, pp. 61-2 & 146-47).

when the German retreat had begun. An increasing feeling of estrangement began to creep in the relations of Har Dayal and his comrades on one hand and the Kaiser and his officials on the other. The attitude of sympathy and comradeship which had marked the beginning of the War altered gradually to suspicion, prejudice and finally to opposition in the later period when the signs of their complete defeat were reported from the warfronts.¹⁶

Although people admired their sacrifices and sympathized with their sufferings, they did not feel inspired by the ideology of revolutionary. Actually, except the HSRA, the rest of them did not subscribe to any common ideology but for expressing the common nationalist aspiration for complete independence and common faith in revolution, and inculcating of an anti-imperialist outlook. There were also quite a good number of these revolutionaries who gave more precedence to political nationalism than socio-economic nationalism. Among was Champa Karan Pillai.

Still another drawback of the movement was that though it aimed at the welfare of all the poor classes and masses, it was being secretly organized and thus isolated from the masses without their co-operation. The people as a mass were conspicuous by their absence, and even in certain cases like that of Khudi Ram Bose who was handed over to the police by private citizens themselves, public apathy and a sense of positive hostility towards the revolutionaries exhibited. Most of them thus appeared to have probably an exaggerated over-confidence about the contribution of the middle class intelligentsia in the national democratic revolution. The democratic content was relatively less conspicuous in their political consciousness and undoubtedly it was unthinkable to their techniques of organization which were emphasized to be belligerent and highly confidential. The revolutionaries believed that the "mass is not for the revolution but the revolution is for the mass."¹⁷ They believed in the technique of maximum sacrifice by minimum

16. Balshastri Hardas, n. 14, p. 279. For further study see also B.N. Agarwala, n. 15, pp. 154-55.

17. *Young India*, 1924-26, a collection of writings by Gandhiji and others, (Madras, 1927), p. 912.

men instead of minimum sacrifice by maximum men in the cause of freedom.

None of these revolutionaries appeared to have ever thought seriously over the failure of the militant movement led by Tilak and others without mass support. They never pondered seriously over the fact that without the active co-operation of the masses and the classes no single individual or group, however great he or it might be, could free the people from foreign domination and provide them the right of freedom and self-determination. Actually speaking, some of these would spend their time stretched out on their wooden cots in the mess or boarding house, dreaming of revolution, but they would never make one. Admitting this limitation of the movement, Yashpal, one of the prominent revolutionaries, had expressed that his comrades did want to sacrifice for the "dumb and exploited" mass but they could not assimilate themselves with it.¹⁸ In this connection it is worth noting that no revolution can take place without necessity. It is brought about by the operation of new social elements. The maturity of the latter is the objective condition for revolution. Until that primary situation is built, no armed upsurge should be operated as it is bound to fail. Social elements hostile to the existing *status quo* must, in the beginning, be mobilized and enrolled in the army of revolution. Only then would be feasible the issue of arming the already existing politically conscious forces eager to struggle for liberation. To implement the idea of revolution propounded by the contemporary forces could mean nothing but to put the cart before the horse. It attached decisive significance to getting hold of arms and when the chance of obtaining them appeared to present itself the young revolutionaries thought that revolution was bound to occur and succeed. They did not pause for a moment to ponder over the problem of enrolling men to carry the arms. The strength of already existing clandestine groups was too meagre to compose an army of revolution.

Besides, a movement in which the masses had no active part could do no good to them. An unsuccessful armed

18. Yashpal, *Simahavalokan* (Lucknow, Viplav Karyalaya, 1951), vol. I, p. 146.

revolution could only mean further misery for the masses. Because it would be still foreign rule for them. Gandhiji appeared to be justified in pointing out in *Young India* on 21 May 1925:

The pilgrimage to swaraj is a painful climb....It means vast organising ability, it means a penetration into the villages solely for the service of the villagers. In other words, it means national education, i. e. education of the masses. It means an awakening of national consciousness among the masses. It will not spring like the magician mango. It will grow almost unperceived like the banyan tree.¹⁹

At a later stage of the movement the revolutionaries had begun to realize their mistake. In 1931 the HRSA issued a new manifesto in which it stated that its strength was not confined to a few armed youth scattered hither and thither, but included of all those millions of their countrymen whose "hearts were burning with hatred against the oppression and blot of British rule." All the toiling peasant and working classes who could not obtain the due reward of their labour in the existing politico-economic system, and thereby deprived of human existence but wanted to live like human beings, were the soldiers of the struggle for national emancipation.²⁰

Going back to the reference of study, the young revolutionaries in Bengal also suffered by the limitation of mass support due to an all together different reason. Most of them belonged to the Bengali *Bhadraloks* who could not identify themselves with the cause of the lower classes. Socially and economically they belonged to the semi-feudal middle classes and thrived on the *zamindari* system. In spite of the idealism that the French Revolution and even October Revolution inculcated in them, they found it difficult to be identified with the elements of social revolution in Bengal and recognize the

19. Jag Pravesh Chander, ed. by, *Gita—the Mother*, a collection of Gandhiji's writings and speeches (Lahore), p. 182.
20. Yashpal, *Simhavalokan* (Lucknow, Viplav Karyalaya, 1952), Vol. II, p. 148.

anti-feudal or anti-capitalist struggle of the peasantry and the working class as their own. They sought to differentiate between political independence and social emancipation and wanted to concentrate all their force on the former. Besides the fundamental differences on social issues the situation was complicated more and more with the passage of time as the petty-bourgeois intelligentsia of Bengal were almost completely Hindu in religion and the labouring masses largely consisted of the Islamic religion. The latter had practically no participation or contribution in bringing about the renaissance, reformation and political consciousness in Bengal. While the former was mostly devoted to the glorification of the Hindu antiquity, the latter had neither the knowledge nor the time to engage themselves in the eulogization of their past. This complicated religious, social and intellectual situation in Bengal favoured the development of revolutionary terrorism as a desperate means of a patriotic Hindu middle class. Denied all power and prestige, suffering with humiliation, the class of young Bengali revolutionaries was isolated from the actual revolutionary mass base. It could not reconcile itself to making the Muslim masses politically radical as the logic of the movement desired, nor it could advocate the anti-feudal struggle of the Muslim peasantry which badly needed economic emancipation.

The problem, however, was not confined only to the co-operation of the Muslim peasantry in Bengal. It must be stated that with minor exceptions the revolutionary terrorism in general did not succeed in enlisting active and overwhelming Muslim support all over the country. The overall emphasis of the glorious Hindu antiquity in the pre-1920 movement could not appeal to the imagination of a Muslim who was generally orthodox in matters of religion, no matter whether he belonged to the feudal class or the caste of the masses. In the latter phase the characterization of the movement by the doctrines of socialism could not attract the mass of the Muslim people which was illiterate, ill-organized and lacking the existence of a middle class intelligentsia as advanced as among the Hindus, to feel its miseries and organize it on a class basis. There was a rare chance for the socialist character of the movement appealing to the upper

class Muslim whose class interests were the very antithesis of any endeavour to socialize the existing Indian life.

The revolutionary organization called *Anushilan Samiti* was established on the initiative of barrister, P. Mitra, and others. There was a regulation in the united *Samiti* under which "No one is to be admitted who is non-Hindu or who has any spite against the Hindus." The *Samiti* had also a regulation referring openly to the exclusion of Muslims:

So far as can be foreseen, it is our firm belief that with a year or two the entire Mohamedan nation will become submissive to the Hindus. But if the Hindus then abandon their firmness and national glory and sink so low as to court friendship with the Mohamedans by being hand in glove with them, the Mohamedans will be puffed up and no good but only evil will be brought about. That nation which cannot preserve its national glory, national greatness and dignity, and national firmness, steadfastness and pride, and on the contrary exhibits levity, baseness and waywardness can never be respected and worshipped by other nations. But in no circumstances would it be proper to show hostile feelings, to deal unjustly with Musalmans as a nation.²¹

Failing thus to resolve the religio-social conflicts of the Muslims and thereby to evoke the courage, patriotism and dynamism of these of their countrymen in the cause of independence, the whole burden of the political struggle had to be borne by the young Hindu revolutionary and he obviously adapted himself to desperate action and secrecy. Lastly, a subjective factor in the case of the Bengali youth was the common sarcasm against them that they were soft and effeminate "Babus", who talked loud but were cowards afraid of action. As such, it was stated that the Bengali young men were born to be mere clerks and slaves. The renaissance in Bengali literature, especially poetry, exhorted them to

21. Cited by James Campbell Ker., I. C. S., *Political Trouble in India, 1907-17*, (Calcutta, 1917), and Muzaffar Ahmad, *Myself and the Communist Party of India* (Calcutta, National Book Agency, 1970), p. 473.

eradicate this stigma on their manhood and establish their worth in patriotic adventure however futile. Moreover, the colonial domination deprived the youth of all normal forms of national service. They were debarred and excluded from all military jobs and obviously turned to any desperate way of action they could discover to fulfil their concepts of bravery and patriotism.

Despite the broad outlook of the majority of the young revolutionaries there were still some who could not get rid of the sectarian and religious approach up to the last moment of their life. If the leader of the Kakori "conspiracy", Ram Prasad "Bismil" uttered certain verses from the Vedas on the occasion of his hanging, Ashfaaulla Khan possessed a copy of the Quran under his arms on a similar occasion. "Bismil" was an orthodox Arya Samajist. Whenever he was free from his revolutionary work, he engaged himself in organizing the *shuddi* and *sangathan* movement.

Due to these limitations the revolutionary terrorism became almost a dying force after 1934-35, not because of the coercion by the alien regime which could only suppress and imprison, not eradicate, but because of basic weaknesses in the movement itself as well as world events. As a group notion, it had almost disappeared, and individual and spasmodic cases were possible due to acts of reprisal, or individual aberration and not to a general conception. During the last phase of the movement many a revolutionary young man had become convinced that purely terrorist methods were useless and attained no good. This did not mean, however, that the revolutionaries had been converted to the Gandhian technique of non-violence, or admirers of alien domination. They had ceased to think in terms of terrorism. That was all.

Despite all these drawbacks it should be admitted that revolutionary terrorism as a technique of action full of dare, danger and suffering, was no temporary phenomenon nor a futile endeavour of blind hatred. The best forces of the nation subscribed to this political philosophy for nearly three long decades. In reality, like the overall struggle of national emancipation of which it was part and parcel, revolutionary

terrorism was a manifestation of the national emergency and also of its unresolved social and religious contradiction. There is no doubt that during the thirty years of its life (1904-34), it failed practically at every phase to achieve its goal. But so failed the nationalist movement led by Congress itself during all its phases of manifestation—in 1905, in 1920-22, in 1930-33, and in 1942. An observation made by Bhagat Singh in this connection in a letter secretly despatched from the Lahore jail on 2 February 1931 is worth quoting. He asserted that any nation which pitted itself against the rulers was bound to suffer reverses with its pioneering endeavours and might obtain certain political concessions through negotiations in the course of its long struggle; but by the time the movement reached the last stage of its struggle, it had organized and strengthened its forces to that extent that the power of the rulers succumbed and was crushed by its eventual assault. It was probable that the movement might be retarded for a brief span and its leadership might be lagging behind, but the evergrowing power of the people, throwing aside bourgeois agreements, might lead the movement to final victory. Thus the movement would ultimately forge ahead. World history was a witness to it.²²

Suppression by the alien regime had succeeded outwardly on every occasion. But terrorism also emerged out of every such occasion of repression, a stronger force with a bigger moral and popular appeal—until it discovered that the long-cherished goals of the movement had been attained one after another, for instance acceptance of Complete Independence as the objective of the forces of national regeneration in 1929, creation of the situation ripe for a revolutionary mass movement by 1935, and finally, the upsurge of the Indian naval forces in 1945-46, which had been visualized since 1914 when the Ghadarists tried to defect the various Indian regiments stationed at Ferozepur, Ambala, Meerut and such other places.

The failure of the movement to get Muslim support was a failure which it shared with Indian nationalism as a whole; it was the failure the reasons of which lay deep in India's past.

22. Cited by Manmath Nath Gupta, *Bharat Mai® Sashtia Kranti-Chesta Ka Romanchakari Itihas*, (Allahabad, 1943), pp. 270-71.

Nevertheless, the revolutionaries succeeded in what they desired to do—evoking by the maximum sacrifice of a minimum chosen persons the spirit of minimum sacrifice on the part of the maximum number of people. The impression they have left on the mind of the people is in the main very effective and great. Their action was the exhortation for living a dedicated and devoted life—self-sacrifice for national emancipation, a feeling of service for the needy and the oppressed poor, and a healthy dislike for self-publicity and political exhibitionism; value for certain basic moral concepts—valour and discipline and dedication to duty in all seriousness, a sincerity in approach. All this certainly made them go in history as heroes leaving their footprints on the sand of times. Displaying his dedication to the movement Ram Prasad “Bismil” wrote:

What an exciting experience,
The blood that flows in my veins,
boils:—“Sword shall not rest
Till the blood flows in veins.”²³

Likewise, there was also the young revolutionary, Madan Lal Dhingra, who was arrested in an attempt to shoot Sir Curzon Wylie. In the course of delivering a statement at the police court in defence of his action he proclaimed:

I believe that a nation held down by foreign bayonets is in a perpetual state of war, since often battle is rendered impossible to a disarmed race....Poor in wealth and intellect a son like myself has nothing else to offer to the mother but his own blood, and so I have sacrificed the same on her altar. The lesson required in India at present is to learn how to die, and the only way to treat it is by dying ourselves. Therefore, I die, and glory in my martyrdom.²⁴

This statement drew from the pen of the die-hard imperialist Winston Churchill, the then Under-Secretary for the

23. *Swami Kashyanand Abhinandan Granth*, (Sangaria, 1958), p. 187.

24. Statement quoted by E. M. S. Namboodiripad, *The Mahatma and the Ism* (Delhi, People's Publishing House, 1958), p. 14.

colonies, the remark, "the finest ever made in the name of patriotism." ²⁵

Soon after the abortive attempt of the Ghadarites to prevail upon the Indian Army men to rise in revolt a Tribunal was set up. The Ghadarites were tried in nine batches in the Lahore Conspiracy and Supplementary cases. Of 291 sent up for trial, 42 were sentenced to death and hanged, 114 were transported for life, 93 were imprisoned to varying terms and 42 were acquitted. The soldiers of the 23rd Cavalry were transferred to a distant station, Nowganj. While their luggage was being loaded on the train, some of the bombs, kept secretly, exploded in a packing case. The court martial sentenced 18 men to death, of whom 12 were hanged. The sentences on others were commuted to life imprisonment. ²⁶

Prominent leaders like Bhai Parmanand, Kartar Singh, Pingale, Jagat Singh and Harnam Singh were also tried under the charge of conspiracy to overthrow the British Government. Pingale and Kartar Singh admitted that the whole responsibility of the conspiracy had been theirs. Kartar Singh's statement was so spirited that the President of the Tribunal was thrilled on hearing the story of the *Ghadar* movement and he forgot to take down notes. He asked Kartar Singh to look to the consequences and restrain himself. At this Kartar Singh remarked: "What consequences, sir? You'll reward me with death. That's all. And I am not afraid of that. My only ambition is to see my Motherland free. I have never done anything out of hatred for an individual, creed or race, or with any mean desire of satisfying my personal interest. Freedom is my only ardent desire; that's my own dream." ²⁷

The Tribunal delivered its judgment on 13 September 1915. Bhai Parmanand was so indifferent to death that on that day he slept till 8 in the morning. When he woke up he found everybody round him laughing. "Why? Are you going to your in-laws?" a friend enquired of him. These "blessed souls" lived for some time together. Now they were to be separated. The bounds of restraint were broken by their

25. Ibid.

26. Khushwant Singh and Satindra Singh, *Ghadar, 1915* (New Delhi, R & K Publishing House, 1966), p. 45.

27. Cited by Dharmavira, n. 12, p. 210.

feelings once more. They sang those sweet songs about the Mother which had kept up their spirits so long. At last they prayed together for the last time: "Oh Mother! we have not been able to snap your fetters. If any one of us remains alive he will strive for your honour and the liberty and equality of Indians." ²⁸ Twenty-four of them, Kartar Singh, Pingale, Bhai Parmanand, Jagat Singh and others, were awarded the death sentences. On hearing this all began to dance. Those who had been condemned to transportation for life to the Andamans cried out: "Give us death! Reward us with hanging!" The President out of grim humour told them that they should appeal for the higher sentence! Kartar Singh, being overjoyed at the thought of martyrdom, thanked the President. Pingale said this much: "So that's all!" The Viceroy, Hardinge, commuted the death sentence of seventeen, including Bhai Parmanand, to transportation for life. Personally Bhaiji preferred death to imprisonment for life. "We were in such a state of intoxication," writes he, "as might be calling a rejoicing....Conversation would be kept up till a very late hour at night, with laughter and mirth, until we would go to sleep weary and exhausted. Our guards would wonder at this and ask if we were going in a marriage procession. They, poor fellows, could never understand what joy is in such a death. When the steamer *Titanic* was about to sink the captain gave orders to the band to play: 'Nearer to Thee My Lord.' They are the bravest of the brave who can welcome death with songs and rejoicings. Death is a beautiful thing. Was I afraid of death? From my childhood I had resolved to lay down my life at the altar of the Motherland. I was blessed because the Almighty had given me an opportunity of welcoming death."²⁹

Pingale was the last to be hanged. "I tried to give you," the officer-in-charge told him, "as much time for life as I could. I kept your turn last." "Then you have made a mistake." Pingale cut up rough. "I've been separated from my friends. They may lose their faith in me. Again, had you sent me earlier, I would have got the privilege of arranging for their reception and comforts there. Oh, you have deprived

28. Ibid.

29. Ibid., pp. 314-15.

me of that good luck.”³⁰ He was questioned about his last desire. He gave out: “Kindly remove my chains, so that I can offer prayers to my Mother with the palms of my hands joined.” When the chains were taken off he prayed aloud: “O Lord, you know our heart’s desire. Our only prayer is that you fulfil the mission for which we have so readily laid down our lives.”³¹

In this way the first act in the great play on the stage of the Punjab was abruptly cut short.

Similarly a little before his hanging, S. Bhagat Singh expressed his deep-felt joy by loudly singing in his cell:

Colour my wears yellow,
Tinged in which hue Shiva,
did unchain the Motherland.³²

On the eve of his being sent to the gallows Ashfaaquilla Khan left a message for his countrymen. He had declared that believing that he was the first among the seven crores of Indian Muslims, who was being hanged for the sake of Indian freedom, he was proud in the “heart of his heart”. There was made no sacrifice in his family for the country so far. Now this blot had been cleaned. He added, “Last good-bye to all. Let India be prosperous, and my people enjoy happiness.”³³

“ ‘Storming heaven’ these historic words are”, commented the famous Bengali writer Gopal Haldar acknowledging the contribution of revolutionaries to nationalism, “perhaps the aptest description of the bold fight for freedom which the revolutionaries...launched and continued, for about thirty years against the mightiest empire of history. It required courage, no doubt, the courage to *do and die* when for genera-

30. Ibid., p. 215.

31. Ibid.

32. Account rendered by Chander Shekhar Shastri who was a co-prisoner of Bhagat Singh in Lahore Jail, *Bharatiya Aatankvad Ka Itihas*, p. 376.

33. *Swami Keshvanand Abhinandan Granth*, n. 23, p. 12.

tions Indians of light and leading had been taught to beg and pray. More, even than that, it required imagination and faith in the national Destiny. For, these revolutionaries dreamt the dreams which came true and remained unshaken in their belief, at an hour when 'responsible citizens' looked confused and crushed at the very ideas of full freedom and the responsibility such freedom would entail. The seeds had been sown earlier by men of vision and courage; but the plant of freedom was watered with the martyrs' blood. It was their revolutionary lot to have the soil watered and not to reap the fruit; nor for many of them, not even to see it in bloom. They were giving themselves, in most cases unknown and unhonoured, to the cause, to live or die as in the Taskmaster's eye, until the goal of freedom was at last accepted as the national objective."³⁴

Militants

When the young revolutionaries were laying down their lives one after another to seek freedom, militants like Aurobindo and Bipin Chandra Pal, escaped to regions of safety. The former retired from politics and engaged himself in the achievement of mystic goals in the French-governed territory of Pondicherry. The latter, whose political vision, in the words of M. N. Roy, was rendered rather foggy by his bourgeois radicalism coupled with religious reformism ³⁵, went on a self-imposed exile to England to propagandize the British concept of bourgeois democracy, thus performing a task for which he and his comrades had raised the earth to the sky in denouncing the Moderates. The astonishing transformation in his political ideas became clearly evident when on leaving London in 1912 he declared: "Should Providence offer me choice of absolute independence for India with one hand, and the alternative of self-government within the Empire with the other, I would unhesitatingly accept the latter."³⁶ Such an utterance certainly

34. Atul Chandra Gupta, ed. by, *Studies in the Bengal Renaissance*, a collection of writings (Jadavpur, the National Council of Education, 1958), p. 224.

35. M. N. Roy, *India in Transition* (Geneva, 1920), p. 199.

36. *Ibid.*

betrayed the modification, if not a *volte face*, of his earlier postulate of militant nationalism.

Only Lokmanya Tilak stood the test of time. He bravely suffered six years imprisonment in an isolated cell of Mandaley jail. But this long suffering cooled down and broke down much of his earlier enthusiasm for militant nationalism, when he was released from jail in 1914. Though acts of terrorism continued, both the Moderate and extremist leaders were apparently united and prepared to accept British-planted rather than revolutionary, change.

World War I

The war that broke out in Europe in August 1914 brought about a truce in nationalist agitation against the British. There was, in fact, an outburst of pro-British enthusiasm which in the light of subsequent events appears almost incomprehensible at the present moment. Many a nationalist thought that by assisting Britain towards victory they might reap some tangible reward. They were hoping against hopes. It did not pinch their conscience in recruiting young Indians as cannonfodder in imperialism's war in return for Home Rule.³⁷ Their belief was encouraged by the Allied Powers' declaration that the war was being waged to make the world safe for democracy. Self-determination for all peoples was the battle cry. Unfortunately, the Indian nationalists were native enough to believe that "all peoples" included Indians. These hopeful co-operators failed to understand the basic nature of imperialism. For the moment, their quasi-political demands were directed towards achieving self-rule within the British empire, and this, they thought, was comparatively little to ask. Indian recruits nearing about 1,200,000 flocked to the army. There were also monetary extractions by the administrative mechanism to contribute to the war fund loans. Certain of Indian loyalty, the British reduced their garrisons in India to 15,000 men and many British administrators

37. It is quite interesting to note how Gandhiji defended the recruitment campaign as part of the campaign for swaraj. "The earliest and straightest way to win swaraj", wrote he, "is to participate in the defence of the Empire. If the Empire perishes, with it will perish our cherished aspirations." [Tendulkar, *Mahatma* (Bombay), p. 280].

went off to fight, transferring their jobs over to Indian subordinates.

The nationalists had believed the war would soon be over. When it dragged on however, their enthusiasm waned. The prolonged war also gave a chance to the government to pressurize and impose restrictions on, the Indian bourgeoisie, which soon convinced them that they should in the interest of their own trade and business support the nationalist movement.

Home Rule Movement

Plans were made to organize a new agitation to attain self-rule and promote national freedom. On 23 April 1916 the Home Rule League was founded by Tilak. Later, in September was established a similar organization in Madras with the cooperation of Mrs. Annie Besant. Gradually its branches spread over a major part of the country.

Through the organs of the League intensive propaganda was carried on in favour of the Home Rule. Tilak felt that if the demand for Home Rule was to be effective, it must be carried through an organised political body. Within a short span of time the new pattern of agitation spread over a large part of the country.³⁸ The strength of the Home Rule Movement was rendered still greater by the adherence to it of a large number of women who worked with the spirit of endurance and self-sacrifice. The women of Madras boasted that their prayers in the temples set the eternal captive free. Home Rule had become interlinked with religion by the prayers offered in the urban temples and spreading from there to village temples, and also by its being preached in the countryside by *sadhus* and *sanyasis*. A powerful publicity campaign was also conducted by Mrs. Besant through her papers, *New India* and *Commonwealth*.

In 1916-17 the League had registered 14,218 members. The head office at Nasik had sent out 5,000 letters and had received more or less in a similar quantity. The League also published

38. For further study see the *Fortnightly Reports* submitted to the Government of India by provincial government in this period.

six Marathi and two English books explaining the doctrine of swaraj, 75,000 copies of Tilak's speeches were issued and they were also published in Gujarati and Kanarese.

Although the alien rulers contended that due to the war emergency it was not the proper time to give self-government to India, the Home Rule Leaguers insisted that no time could be more suitable than when the great war itself was being fought for liberty, democracy and equality. These sentiments of the nationalists were reflected in the following statement of Mrs. Annie Besant, when she stated in a public meeting at Poona on 22 May 1916:

It is said that you ought not to embarrass the British Government by raising such a question as this in the middle of the war. We are only following the example of the self-governing Dominions. We are only taking the advice of Mr. Bonar Law, the late Colonial Secretary, who advised the Dominions to strike the iron while it was red-hot.... The iron is red-hot, but after the reconstruction of the Empire the iron will be cold, and where, I ask, is the blacksmith who allows a red-hot iron to cool down before he tries to strike short, to meet the objections that are made.³⁹

The central figure of the Home Rule Movement, however, was Lokmanya Tilak who provided dynamic character to it by making a whirlwind tour all over the country in 1918. In his public speeches he proclaimed emphatically that Home Rule was the only cure for India's political ills and grievances, that liberty is the birthright of every man in this world, that the aspiration to get one's liberty was the essence of human nature. But the prevailing political environment in India was contrary to these basic dictums of human life. A small minority not from among the people but from outside was arbitrarily controlling their life. It must be changed. In his Belgaum speech he stated:

Those who are ruling over you do not belong to your religion, race or even country.... We do not want the

39. *Speeches and Writings of Annie Besant* (Natesan & Co., 1918), p. 81.

Secretary of State who has been created a son-in-law.... Basic changes must be brought about so as to promote the well-being of the people.... The question of swarajya is in whose hands should be the administration carried on in our India?.... The swarajya agitation is now carried on in the belief that this administration if carried on by some one else, or some other visible form would be more beneficial to the people than when carried on by those by whose hands it is now carried on.... The system which is subsisting now is not wanted by us.... To entrust to the people the responsibility of administering their own affairs is the best principle in politics.... There is no question about this. The same principle prevails in the country of those that are governing here in this land of ours. When these people go back to their country they have to uphold that principle.... We want rights. We want a certain sort of arrangement giving happiness. We will get it. Our children will get it. Make the effort that is to be made. Be ready to do this work with the thought that the country belongs to you.⁴⁰

After Belgaum, Tilak made a trip to Ahmednagar, Nasik and many other places at the end of May 1916, emphasizing the importance of his new ideal. His campaign in Ahmednagar gathered momentum and gave impetus to the struggle of independence. Inspired by the spirit of patriotism and nationalism he proclaimed that he who had to live in England and manage the affairs of the whole Empire got five thousand rupees, while he who carried on the administration of India here got twenty thousand rupees per month. Why so? This was because the latter was managed at the cost of others. He stated ironically "This is India. Go and eat."⁴¹ Continuing he stated:

For... the sort of injustice that is taking place in India, there is no other remedy than that the power should pass into the people's hands and rest in the

40. *Bal Gangadhar Tilak: His Writings and Speeches* (Madras, Ganesh & Co., 1919, Second ed.), pp. 105, 109 & 137.

41. *Ibid.*, pp. 138 & 152.

hands of the people.... We must decide upon the arrangement as regards what is to be done in our homes, what is to be done in our villages, what is to be done in our Presidency and what is to be done in our country.... There are no means of salvation for us unless we have it (self-rule) in our possession. This principle of politics is almost settled — proved—from the point of view of history, morality and social science.⁴²

In the next speech delivered at the same place he stated that *swaraj* was the key to all things. The chief question was whether a certain nation was to be treated like beasts or whether considering the people of the nation to be men, their sentiment, and desire for liberty were to be given the right direction. If the matter be considered from such a standpoint, then there was no other way to accomplish this than *swaraj*.⁴³

On his birthday meeting held in July, 1916 Tilak exhorted the assembled gathering to devote themselves to the cause of nationalism and stated:

The national work which faces us today is so great, extensive and urgent; that you and I must work together with all the courage and enthusiasm we can muster.... It is motherland that calls every one of us to be up and doing and I hope that her sons will not fail her.⁴⁴

Though the speeches delivered by Tilak at Belgaum and Ahmednagar had lost much of the fiery ardour of previous occasions and were a stepping stone to conciliation with the alien rule, yet they appeared dangerous and "seditious" to the alien bureaucracy. It alleged that Tilak had incited the people to be disloyal to the "Government established by

42. Ibid., pp. 152-54.

43. Ibid., pp. 164-65, 169-70 & 176.

44. S.V. Bapat, ed. by, *Reminiscences and Anecdotes about Lokamanya Tilak* (Poona 1924) Vol. I, p. 479. See also B.N. Agarwala, *Viplav Yagye Ki Aahutiyan* (Mirzapore, Krantikari Prakashan, 1970), pp. 39-41 & 121-23.

law." Hence it demanded a security for good behaviour, amounting to Rs. 40,000, from which he could be relieved only by the Bombay High Court. On his acquittal he was served with notice under the Defence of India Act, banning his entering the Punjab and the Delhi provinces. About the same time, two securities of Rs. 2,000 and Rs. 10,000 were demanded from Mrs. Besant's *New India*. Circulars were issued forbidding students in colleges and schools to attend Home Rule meetings. A few days later Mrs. Besant, along with her two associates, G.S. Arundale and B.P. Wadia, was interned by the Madras Government. As soon as she was arrested a powerful agitation was set afoot to get her released and to convert the Home Rule Programme into still a more bitter anti-British agitation. There were unparalleled demonstrations all over the country. They affected the mind of persons like M.A. Jinnah who immediately joined the Bombay Home Rule League. Shortly afterwards he was elected its President.

At this time another incident took place which gave impetus to the movement. The Delhi War Conference was held in April 1918. Prominent national leaders from all over the country were invited to it. But Tilak's name was not in the list. When this fact was pointed out the Bombay Governor included Tilak among the provincial leaders who were called in for consultation. During the course of his speech supporting the resolution on recruiting Indians in the Army Tilak went on to state that the enthusiasm of the people would be better roused if the appeal was coupled with a promise of Home Rule. To the Governor the mention of this issue was displeasing. He immediately asked Tilak to stop his speech and sit down. Tilak promptly replied that if he was not permitted to express his views freely he had no option but to walk out, and as he left the meeting hall many others like Mahatma Gandhi, B.G. Horniman, editor of the *Bombay Chronicle*, N.C. Kelkar and a number of others, followed him.

The incident enraged the members of the Bombay Home Rule League. They resented the public insult to the members of the Indian Home Rule League by Lord Willingdon, as Chairman of the Bombay Provincial War Conference. On

16 June 1918 there took place a huge demonstration at Shantaram's Chawl. The day was Home Rule Day and was celebrated with a demonstration of volunteers flying flags throughout the city and collecting funds in aid of the League. Many well-known women and men acted as voluntary collectors on the occasion. The principal market centres remained closed. Gandhiji presided over the evening meeting which was overcrowded. In a unanimous resolution the meeting disapproved the methods and measures of government for the utilization of the manpower and the resources of India. In his speech the Chairman condemned the unmannerly and unfair behaviour of the Governor. The other speaker, Mr. Jinnah, expressed his doubts about the genuineness of the government's promises. The members also decided not to attend any meeting presided over by Lord Willingdon so long as he did not withdraw his insult. Later, the Bombay Home Rule League also opposed the extension of any public farewell to the Bombay Governor on his retirement.

The agitation for Home Rule continued unabated in press also. In one of his editorials N.C. Kelkar, the editor of *Mahratta*, proclaimed that India was determined that she would not herself take rest nor allow rest in England so long as she had not obtained her goal. There could be no going back. India would not and could not accept any "half-way house" to her ambition. People could not rest content with the crumb thrown to them. Why should India care who ruled her if she was not to have a self-respectful status as a nation. He continued, "She refuses to regard her present position of milchcow to the British Empire as dignified. There is no glory in being a bondman, though attached to the ratinue of the most illustrious master in the world.... The clash of arms is much better for mankind than emasculating peace. Erring but responsible manhood is preferable to a life long though secure tutelage. The rugged national life, the uneven social surface in pre-British times, was certainly preferable to the dead level and the dull uniformity, established by the steam-roller of British Rule in which first class eminence is impossible and all aspiring poppies are always in danger of being cut down." He added that during the British rule for over 150 years there had not been a man who was deemed fit to be distinguished enough to be a Revenue Commissioner in the Civil Service or a Second Lieutenant in the Army.

“Even a Shivaji could not hope under the British rulers to rise above the rank of Subedar-Major”, he concluded.⁴⁵

A paragraph appeared in the British socialist paper *Justice* of 22 June 1916 in which it was said that it was none too soon to consider what steps should be taken to give India Home Rule after the war. The *Times* (London) of June 19 made an embittered and sarcastic attack on the Home Rule League for India. A commentator, however, added, “We do not know who are members of the League, nor have we seen the leaflets. But, as soon as peace is proclaimed, after the final defeat of the Germanic Powers, we shall be glad to co-operate in a movement for the emancipation of India. We do not see how Englishmen who claim that they are fighting for national freedom in Europe, can honestly continue a system of foreign despotism over 315,000,000 people in Hindustan.” Referring to Lord Hardinge, the ex-Viceroy, who had made a speech claiming marvellous beneficial results from British rule the commentator added: “As common Englishmen, not highly paid aristocrats and officials, we challenge every word of this. It is simply not true. Moreover, so insecure is our tenure of this vast empire that Lord Lansdowne and Sir Edward Grey have entered into the treaties with Japan to hold India for us in case of need. In return Japan has been given a free hand in China. We bear in mind, too, that Indian troops, on the strength of those Japanese treaties, have been fighting on our side in Europe as well as in Asia. Home Rule in India will greatly benefit both India and England.”⁴⁶

Though the substantial contribution made by Home Rule Leaguers to the growth of nationalist spirit cannot be minimized, it can be said that it was no effective contribution. The deliverance of public speeches and writings for the cause of nationalism was not accompanied by any positive action. It remained merely a theoretical contribution. No passive resistance or any other sort of agitation was planned. Tilak who had previously gained a reputation of being a

45. Cited by N. C. Kalkar, “Self-Government of India” *The Indian Review* (Madras, 1918) Vol. XIX, p. 106.

46. *Weekly Report of the Director, Criminal Intelligence* dated 22 July, 1916; Home (Pol.) Deposit, July 1916, No. 441-45, p. 23.

fiery nationalist now was appearing as conciliatory nationalist. It is fully evident in his Belgaum speech and the speeches delivered subsequently. On 10 May 1915 he delivered a lecture at Poona on "India and Reform." He began by describing how the power of the Marahattas passed into the hands of the British, who, as they learned more of the country and the arts of government, gradually deprived their native subordinates of real influence. India, he said, was now governed by Europeans on European principles. The object of demanding self-government was that, although the administration might remain in the hands of Europeans the policy of the administration might be dictated by Indians. So long as Indians could not direct the general policy of the Government it was of no use to agitate about the details of administration. He had no complaints to make against government officials. They only obeyed orders and were the servants of their pay. *India needed British rule, but not bureaucracy.* When the war was over the rulers must grant Indians some favour.⁴⁷ Speaking two years later, in the 1917 session of the Indian National Congress, Tilak had showed an inclination towards moderation:

I do not oppose the immediate introduction of Home Rule in India. But I do not think that it is practical demand. Some compromise has, therefore, to be made with those that are in power and also with our opponents here. Even the British Government in India was introduced by a compromise by a charter from the Delhi Government. The first step of British rule in any province which they did not conquer was always by consent and compromise.... We do not want the whole hog at once.... In the present circumstances I shall be quite content... if the first step (establishment of responsible government in the province and not in the centre just now) that we demand is granted to us immediately. And by full self-government at an early date, I do not think any sane man will understand more than 10 to 15 years at most.⁴⁸

47. Home (Pol.) Deposit, Govt. of India, June 1915, File No. 549-52, p. 6.

48. Annual Session of the Indian National Congress Report 1917; Home (Pol.) Deposit. File No. 172. p. 52.

The conciliatory tone of the leaders also affected the followers. A conference of the extremist politicians of the Bombay Presidency was held at Poona on 8-10 May 1915. The conference was styled by its promoters the Seventeenth Bombay Provincial Conference but its claim to this title was vigorously challenged by members of the Moderate Party, who intended to hold a conference of their own next month. The following account of proceedings is taken from a report by a correspondent of the Bombay Government Special Department:

The general tone of the conference was one of moderation of policy for some time. Extremists like Mr. Khadilkar and Mr. S.M. Paranjpe took only a minor part in the proceedings. It is beyond doubt that leaders exerted their influence to moderate the demands put forth. For instance, the resolutions about the Arms Act and Home Rule, although passed only in the subjects committee, were brought up for reconsideration and finally dropped. It was argued that the demand for arms was one that could not be granted by Government at the present crisis, and that the resolution about Home Rule would commit the conference to a particular ideal and might be used by the moderates as an argument against compromise.⁴⁹

The proceedings of the conference were of so mild a nature that the *Dhyan Prakash*, a moderate newspaper, taunted the leaders with having forsaken their old principle and become more meak-minded than the Moderates.

The days of fiery speeches against and denunciation of the alien rule were over. A new phase of conciliation and compromise, responsive co-operation set in. Some substantial contribution to the growth of nationalism did come in the shape of the Montagu-Chelmsford Report, it cannot be considered a turning point in the evolution of nationalism in India.

The Government's repressive measures perhaps appeared to have torn down the spirit of the stormy petrels of the

49. Home (Pol.) Deposit, June 1915, Govt. of India, No. 549-52, p. 10.

movement. People felt that Tilak himself had become a Moderate, that with age his former spirit was broken. That is why he made the loyalty declaration and even organized a public meeting in Poona to vote an address of thanks to Lord Hardinge who was due to retire as Viceroy and Governor-General of India. No longer did Tilak remain the embodiment of hatred of everything British. For some time the people had begun to believe that this approach indicated the beginning of the end of his political career. On the other hand, by introducing the slogan of Home Rule, Annie Besant "saved India for the Empire.... The reactionary nationalism preached by Mrs. Besant...was not compatible with the form of political state which would be the corollary to Home Rule", thus alleged M. N. Roy.⁵⁰

50. M. N. Roy, *India in Transition* (Geneva, 1922), p. 231.

CHAPTER IV

ECONOMIC NATIONALISM

A—Clash of Economic Interests

Compare the present and past conditions of India. It was once remarked by Lord Clive that there were many cities in India before which even London sank into insignificance. Where, however, are those cities now? The time for reparation for the injuries received by us from foreigners in the past has come. It will rend your heart to hear with what unfair means the trade and industries of India were killed. You should breathe new life into the dead trade of your country, and should not be afraid of any opposition, because no power (on earth) can withstand that of truth.

[Speech delivered by Sardar Ajit Singh in Rawalpindi on 3 May 1907; Selections from the Native Newspapers published in the Punjab (Confdl), Vol. 19, p. 144.]

Domination of Economic Life by British Firms

The post-1857 period which is called by bourgeois historians as the Victorian Age, was the heyday of British Imperialism's prosperity and glory. The Crystal Palace Exhibition (1851) was followed by a number of such exhibitions which demonstrated the ever-growing and expanding power of British Imperialism. By the beginning of the twentieth century, the British Empire covered one-fourth of the world. Its inhabitants constituted a quarter of the world's population. Nearly 71 per cent of them were in India and another 14 per cent in other regions of Asia. No

wonder that every die-hard imperialist in England plumed himself with pride in contemplating this unprecedented phenomenon in global history. With its navy which ruled the waves British Imperialism opened an all-round offensive against India's national economy towards the beginning of twentieth century. Lord Curzon's Viceroyalty was the Golden Age of British rule in India. At that time British Imperialism fearlessly took all sorts of steps intensifying the exploitation of the Indians to the benefit of the British monopoly capitalists. "It was an era of shameless infiltration by British capital, the effects of which", writes a Soviet scholar in a recent study, "were felt in one way or another by almost all classes and strata of Indians society." ¹

The foremost manifestation of this exploitation was the use of India as the hinterland for the sale of British manufactures and source of raw material for the metropolitan economy. Those were the times when the inflow of private British capital increased. The British bourgeoisie started plantations, opened factories and took up other beneficial bourgeois undertakings all over India.

According to the information released by the Government of India, there were 165 foreign joint-stock companies functioning in India in 1905. Most of them were registered abroad, largely in England, but operated for the most part in this country. They possessed a total paid-up capital of £ 69,000,000 besides debentures of £ 27,700,000. Their paid-up capital was three times the paid-up capital of the British and Indian companies registered in India. By March 1906 in India there were registered 1,728 joint-stock companies with a paid-up capital of £ 27,900,000. ² These data clearly establish the absolute domination of the British bourgeoisie over largescale bourgeois enterprise in this country. The

1. A.I. Levkovsky, "Beginning of Mass Liberation Struggle", I.M. Reisner and N.M. Goldberg, ed. by, *Tilak and the Struggle for Indian Freedom* (People's Publishing House, 1966), p. 318.

2. *Moral and Material Progress and Condition in India during the Year 1906-07* (London, 1908), p. 44.

capital of these different companies was distributed among various branches of enterprise in the following way: ³

| | |
|-------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------|
| a. Railway | £ 43,500,000 in stocks and £ 24,700,000 in bonds |
| b. Tea Industry | £ 12,200,000 |
| c. Jute Mills | £ 2,400,000 |
| d. Mining and quarrying | £ 4,800,000 |
| e. Gold fields of Southern India | £ 2,400,000 |

Simultaneously it should be remembered that the paid-up capital of those companies was only a small part of the total British capital investment in this country, which even the lowest calculations put at five or six times of the former.⁴

As the colonies of the British Empire were governed by a political apparatus which was controlled by the bourgeois class in England, they brought pressure upon the Government of India to adopt measures to their benefit. On the basis of that more than Rs. 20,000,000 had been invested in jute in the 18 months preceding 1905, but the prominent British banker and Calcutta jute monopolist Andrew Yule urged official sanction for the expansion of area under jute.⁵ On the other hand, Lord Reay, retired bureaucrat, exhorted a London gathering of British bourgeoisie to invest their capital in India, where labour was cheap and where there were no organized trade unions to create trouble.⁶ The colonial authorities in India lost no time in obliging the British monopolists. Caricaturing this imperialist phenomenon of unholy alliance in an ever memorable language the militant newspaper *Bande Matram* in a leader entitled "The New Ideal", had remarked:

3. *Indian Financial Statement for the year 1908-09* (London, 1909), p. 44.

4. For further study see *Supplement to Report on the Census of India's Foreign Liabilities and Assets as on 30 June 1948* (Bombay, Reserve Bank of India, 1950).

5. *Times of India—sunday section* (Bombay), 25 February 1905, p. 12.

6. *Ibid.*

The present domination is a rule of shop-keepers who are at the same time bureaucrats, a combination of the worst possible qualities for imperial government. The shop-keeper rules by deceit, the bureaucrat by the use of red tape. The shop-keeper by melancholy meanness alienates the subject population, the bureaucrat by soulless rigidity deprives the administration of life and human sympathy. The shop-keeper uses his position of authority to push his wares and fierce his subjects, the bureaucrat forgets his duty, and loses his royal character in his mercantile greed. The shop-keeper becomes a gigantic retail trader, the bureaucrat a pocket Machiavel. By this confusion of *Dharmas*, *Varmā* *Shankara* is born in high places and the nation first and the rulers afterwards go to perdition. This is what has happened in India under the present regime. The bureaucracy have ruled in the spirit of a mercantile Power, holding its position by aid of mercenaries, afraid of its subjects, with no confidence in its destiny, with no trust even in the mercenaries who support it, piling up gold with one hand, with other holding a borrowed sword over the head of a fallen people.... The strength of England has been held as a threat in the background, not as a source of quiet and unostentatious self-confidence which enables the rulers to be generous as well as just. ⁷

Thus the development of India's economic life was subordinated to the needs of the metropolitan country. Among all the British colonies perhaps India suffered the worst under the operation of this economic policy. The Indian ventures owned by the alien financial agencies were Indian only in the geographical sense. Industrial revolution in India was a one-way traffic. It was seriously obstructed by British economic policy right up to World War I, when owing to English industry being used to produce war materials, a limited growth of Indian industry was permitted.

7. *Selections from the Bande Matram* (Banaras, Swaraj Publishing House, 1922), pp. 16-7.

This was merely a temporary change in the policy of the colonialists and was reversed about 1922.

The main aim of the British Government was to reduce India to the level of a nearly agricultural country producing raw materials only, without industries to manufacture the same. The following oft-quoted graphical account of exploitation rendered by late Ranade is quite revealing:

This dependency has come to be regarded as a "plantation" growing raw produce to be shipped by British agents in British ships, to be worked into fabrics by British skill and capital, and to be re-exported to the dependency by British merchants to their corresponding British firms in India and elsewhere. Except in the large presidency town, the country is fed, clothed, warmed, washed, lighted, helped and comforted generally by a thousand arts and industries, in the manipulation of which its sons have every day a decreasing share. The political domination of one nation by another attracts more attention than the more formidable, though unfelt, domination which the capital, enterprise and skill of one country exercise over the trade and manufactures of others. This latter domination has an insidious influence which paralyses the springs of all the varied activities which together make up the life of a nation. The progress of ruralisation in India means its rustication, i.e., a loss of power and intelligence and self-dependence. Foreign competition is transferring the monopoly, not only of wealth, but what is more important, of skill, talent and activity to others.⁸

Rabindranath Tagore also alleged:

...thus India is being turned into so many predigested morsels of food ready to be swallowed at any moment by any nation which has even the most rudimentary set of teeth in its head.⁹

8. Cited in the *Report of the Thirteenth Indian Industrial Conference held at Calcutta on 30 and 31 December 1917*, p. 90.

9. Rabindranath Tagore, *Nationalism* (London, Macmillan & co., 1920, Fourth ed.), p. 126.

This economic disproportion led to the transformation of India into a colonial appendage. Millions of her artisans and handicraftsmen were ruined by the heavy influx of cheap industrial goods from Britain. Such economic growth came in clash with the interests of the Indian people. It culminated in the voicing of strong protests by the indigenous forces of national regeneration. Deep Narain Singh, a delegate at the 1908 session of the Indian National Congress, commented, "The economic policy of Great Britain towards India... is one in regard to which we have not one word of praise to give."¹⁰

Policy of Free Trade

The second stage of economic exploitation began when Britain imposed on India the policy of free trade, i.e., permitting all the leading trading countries of the world to compete in the Indian markets, although Britain's own trading policy for centuries had been that of protection in order to build up a powerful industrial base. But once England had succeeded in its object of monopolizing world trade market, it removed import or export duties. The policy of free trade in India produced results of a disastrous nature. It exposed even the smallest concerns in India to a world-wide competition. The leaders of public opinion emphasized the demand against the perpetuation of the doctrine of free trade. In the annual session of the National Congress held in 1912 Babu Ambika Charan Mazumdar said sarcastically:

Free trade indeed; But we cannot forget that Free Trade is another name for protection. What is Free Trade to one country is protection to another. England is the greatest manufacturer, the greatest producer in the world and the whole world is her market and she will, of course, like free trade

10. *Report of the proceedings of the twenty-third Indian National Congress* held at Madras in December 1908, p. 89.

Likewise another delegate, K. Perrazu also pointed out: "The cheapness of foreign made articles is dearly bought by the loss of industrial states and the reduction of a whole people to a helpless proletariat. National defence against alien industrial inroads is our foremost duty. Foreign made articles have strangled the whole vitality of the population." [Ibid.]

throughout the world. Why cannot England go to France and Germany and educate and preach that "Free Trade is the best thing, why should you not open your doors to us?"... An excise duty has been imposed on cotton goods that is Free Trade. Hall marking on silver—that is free trade indeed!... The other day our Chamberlain was advocating retaliation, preference and so forth. These are words without a meaning. What you call retaliating, what you call preference in fact is a fallacy, a political jugglery.¹¹

The policy of free trade was temporarily changed in 1916 when a protective duty of 3.5 per cent (later raised to 15 per cent) was placed on cotton imports, and in that very year the Indian Industrial Commission was set up to examine the possibilities and technical conditions of industrial development. The hostility of the rising Indian bourgeoisie and the pact for the first time of the Moslem League with the Indian National Congress at Lucknow had forced the British regime to concede these concessions. The political counterpart of the Industrial Commission was the publication of the Montford Report. Its basic object was to seek the co-operation of the rising Indian capitalist class by a political concession coupled with snobbishly vague talk about a "forward policy" in industrial development.

With the passage of time even these meagre concessions were not implemented.

Exchange Ratio

The policy of free trade was accompanied with the Indian currency of the rupee being firmly bound to the pound sterling. It had particularly grave consequences for India's ensuing economic development. The rupee was quoted at 1 shilling 4 pence and was taken off the silver backing. According to a spokesman of the Indian trading class, the implementation of the new exchange ratio of the rupee was

11. *Report of the proceedings of the annual session of the Indian National Congress held in 1912*, p. 16.

tantamount to the fixing of a 30 per cent duty on Indian exports.¹² Such a measure boosted the import of British commodities into India and the inflow of British capital.

Import and Export

The British bureaucracy left no stone unturned to please the British monopolies. Speaking to a gathering of near-about 40 British merchants who by assembling at Calcutta in 1905 had set up the European Chamber of Commerce, as the highest representative of British crown in India, Viceroy Lord Curzon said that the interests which they represented were very important ones and were "commensurate with the whole field of economic development upon which the future prosperity of this country so largely depends." He also added that their meetings and discussions concerned a much wider class than the members of Chamber of Commerce alone, because they affected the vital interests of the country, at large. He was also glad to note how general a recognition there appeared to be of the community of interests between Government and commerce in the country.¹³

The Viceroy's speech evoked strong protest from every section of the politically advanced forces in India. The pursuance of such a biased approach in economic affairs had culminated, they complained, in returning a maximum of profit dividends to foreign businessmen and a maximum of financial loss to domestic traders.¹⁴ "So long as the

12. *Times of India*, 11 March, 1905, p. 15.

13. Cited in the *Report of the First Indian Commercial Congress* held at Bombay, on 26 December, 1915, p. 12.

14. It must be pointed out that there were few big businessmen or merchants in Bengal at that time who engaged in foreign trade. The Anglo-Indian newspaper *Pioneer* acknowledged the predominance of British and, to some extent, Indian businessmen other than Bengalis, over the commercial life of Bengal: "...take any list of companies and cast your eyes over the names of the managing agents or proprietors, and those other than European can be counted on the fingers of one hand (and none of even those few are Bengalis)... Take... the lists of native firms in Calcutta, and all those trading abroad whose transactions show enterprise and are of any volume will be found, with very few exceptions, to be Marwaris or other up-country natives." [*Times of India*, 28 April, 1906, p. 18.] From this quotation it is self-evident why the Bengali propertied classes took more extensive action against British imports.

Government of a country is not thoroughly national in spirit and sentiment and personnel; so long as it is from its constitution and accident of its foreign character, more or less exclusive... it must be ignorant of the time feelings and the real needs of the people", complained thus Fazulbhoy Carrimbhoy in his presidential address delivered at the first session of the Indian Commercial Congress (held at Bombay on 26 December 1915) — an organization set up by Indian bourgeoisie to match the European Chamber of Commerce. Explaining the reason of such a sorry state of affairs the president complained that the British regime was subject to the powerful influence of the ruling nation which had sometimes conflicting interests, and an effective industrial and commercial organization which could make that influence irresistible. The Government of India was, therefore, powerless to shape its commercial and industrial policy "with a sole eye to Indian interests". The British manufacturer and merchant, with their votes which they knew how to use to the best advantage, were masters of the situation. Deploring this state of affairs the president lamented over the naked reality, "Ours is not a self-governing country". Continuing his speech he demanded all-round improvement in fiscal and commercial matters. "*In a word we want self-government in commerce and industry*", he concluded his argument.¹⁵

15. *Report of the first session of the Indian Commercial Congress*, n. 13, pp. 13-4.

It does not, however, mean that all the commercial bourgeoisie in India were critique of British policy. There were persons like Dinshaw Edulji Wacha present at the same session who appreciated the policy of the colonialists. Speaking in the capacity of the Chairman of the Reception Committee at the very session Dinshaw Wacha did not hesitate for a moment to say, "... I am strongly of conviction from my study of the World's international trade for the past fifty years that our rulers are on the whole following a policy which is certain to lead to the greater material prosperity of the land." Eulogizing the services of British Navy during the War he remarked: "India cannot but express her warmest gratitude to Great Britain for her magnificent Navy which has kept the wide seas open to all neutrals for purposes of commerce. But for that invaluable service which that Great Armada... far surpassing that which Queen Elizabeth put forth to vanquish her enemies, has rendered and is rendering to the peaceful world at large, we do not know how the foreign trade of this country might have suffered and

It may be recalled that as a result of British policy in trade 80 per cent of India's exports were raw materials and 60 per cent of the imports were manufactured goods, particularly from England. According to a liberal estimate made in 1907 the total imports of India were worth Rs. 100 crores a year; and the total exports (basically of raw materials) amounted to Rs. 150 crores a year.¹⁶ The information provided by official sources tallies with the above assertion.

There was the dislocation of trade noticeable in the earlier stages of World War I. With enemy countries it was stopped and there were acute transport difficulties, particularly shipping. There was made a never-ending demand, for transporting soldiers, sailors and war stores. Besides, enemy submarines torpedoed some of the vessels carrying cargo. Thus transport was dislocated. Ships were scarce and freight rates high. Even otherwise, the countries imposed restrictions on production. Nevertheless, the trade acquired a speedy routine in the latter phase of the War. In a confidential fortnightly Report submitted to the Home Secretary, Government of India, the Chief Secretary to the Government of Bombay, L. Robertson, had reported that in August 1916 there was a notable increase of Rs. 23.66 lakhs in the value of imports for the first fortnight of July over the normal for the corresponding period before the war. The total value of imports was Rs. 2.42 crores and of exports Rs. 1.95 crores. The number of vessels entered was 27 with a tonnage of 77,220 against 29 with a tonnage of 88,291. Clearances numbered 20 with a tonnage of 55,999 against 24 of 73,122 tons in pre-war years.¹⁷ In a confidential Report submitted in September 1916 by L. Robertson, the Chief Secretary to the Government of Bombay, to S.R. Hignell, Home Secretary to the Government of India, it was pointed

how crippled might have been its great internal trade. Indians should bear in mind with undying gratitude this great service the British Navy has been doing all throughout this horrible war." And no sooner Mr. Wacha finished speaking he was loudly applauded by a section of the audience. [Ibid., pp. 4 & 6.]

16. *Speeches of Gopal Krishna Gokhale*, (Madras, G.A. Natesan & Co., 1920), p. 122.

17. Home (Pol.) Deposit., Government of India, File August 1916, No. 25.

out that the trade in Bombay continued to be active. The total value of imports during the fortnight ending 15 September 1916 was 2.59 crores showing an increase of 42.3 lakhs over the normal for the corresponding period before the war. Imports of gold fell from 68.09 lakhs to 12.57 lakhs and those of silver from 20.51 lakhs to 2.16 lakhs. The total value of exports of Indian produce amounted to 1.99 crores as against the normal of 1.64 crores. The peculiar feature of the trade had been a very large increase in the exports of raw cotton to Italy, the amount of which exceeded the normal by early 9,000 cwt. The number of vessels entered was 19 with a tonnage of 52,412 against 28 of 2,820 tons. Clearances numbered 18 with a tonnage of 44,165 against 22 of 61,729 tons. The average rates of homeward freight for general cargo during the fortnight were steady and stood at 131 sh.-3 d. per ton on dead weight basis.¹⁸

Near about a year later Robertson again reported that the total value of imports of merchandise amounted to 2.68 crores, showing an increase of 57.53 lakhs over the normal for the corresponding period before the war. The increase was mainly due to larger arrival of textiles, sugar, and kerosine. Receipts of gold fell by Rs. 76.24 lakhs to Rs. 58.79 lakhs and those of silver by Rs. 30.53 lakhs to Rs. 2.14 lakhs. The exports of Indian produce during the fortnight were valued at Rs. 3.4 crores, showing an advance of Rs. 59.70 lakhs over the normal owing to the large increase in raw cotton to the United Kingdom and Japan, while Aden and the Red Sea Ports and Portuguese East Africa took large shipments of cotton piecegoods. The expansion under the heading of grain was again largely due to the shipments on government account to Portsaid "For Orders". The number of vessels entered was 14 with a tonnage of 44,580 against 29 of 85,649 tons. Clearances numbered 18 with a tonnage of 53,464 against 23 of 66,966 tons. The average rates of homeward freight for general cargo dropped from 275 shillings to 210 shillings per ton measurement.¹⁹

18. Home (Pol.) Deposit, Government of India, File October 1916, No. 29.

19. Home (Pol.) Deposit, Government of India, File October 1917, No. 2, pp. 8-9.

Reports submitted from other provinces also spoke of the same progress. In a confidential report on the political situation in Bengal for the second half of July 1916, submitted by J.H. Keer, Chief Secretary to the Government of Bengal, to S.R. Hignell, officiating Home Secretary to the Government of India, the following was written about the trade and commerce:

In spite of trade being somewhat slack, the import revenue shows a considerable improvement. The position of the Manchester goods market is reportedly to be strong and it is probable that values will again advance further, several cargoes of sugar have arrived from Java.

On the export side there has also been an improvement which for the week ending the 24th July amounted to 15% as compared with the same period of 1915. Export bales of Jute have been very much neglected as buyers have not been in a position to operate in the absence of tonnage. Kutcha bales have, however, risen in consequences of the recent Government announcement regarding war bags. On the whole, the tone of the market is healthy. Although a steamer from Russia was expected at the end of the month, the tonnage available in the near future is not great, and it is probable that Japanese steamers will have to be chartered for the tea trade which, of course, means a higher of freight.²⁰

Reporting on the trade and commerce situation in Bengal for the second half of September 1916, J.H. Keer had written to the Home Secretary to the Government of India that on the import side, trade had been rather slack during the previous fortnight. There had, however, been a considerable increase in the amount of tobacco imported and there had been also heavy imports of machinery and hardware. Eight vessels had arrived with salt from Liverpool, but arrival of sugar had not been quite as large as in the

20. Home (Pol.) Deposit, Government of India, File August 1916, No. 23, p. 9.

previous fortnight. On the export side there had been some improvement in trade. Shipments of jute for Dundee had been active, and during the fortnight three vessels had cleared with over 86,000 bales while three more were loading. The market for jute manufactures had been strong and had resulted in an abnormal rise in jute shares. There had been heavy shipments of tea for Russia. In the freight market scarcity of tonnage continued to restrict business.²¹

This process of increasingly tying up India's economy with the world market—a process laid down by British Imperialism in order to pursue its own selfish ends and applying its own techniques of exploitation—had begun much earlier at the turn of the century. It may be recalled that India's oversea trade, export and import, developed from Rs. 1900 million in 1890 to Rs. 2,900 million in 1905.²² A corresponding change also took place in the number and tonnage of the foreign cargo ships that called at Indian airports; but it should also be remembered that there was always an excess of exports every time. In 1903-04 it was worth £ 23.8 millions or Rs. 357 millions. Developments in the subsequent period speak of the same truth, as is evident from the following table:²³

| Year | Imports (£ Millions) | Exports (£ Millions) | Excess of exports (£ Millions) |
|---------|-------------------------|-------------------------|-----------------------------------|
| 1913-14 | 164.5 | 177.0 | 12.5 |
| 1920-21 | 400.5 | 309.8 | 90.7 (Excess of imports) |
| 1922-23 | 328.0 | 335.3 | 6.3 |

In this total business of exports and imports India had to sustain a loss of about Rs. 30 to 40 crores a year. And “no country, not even the richest in the world, can stand”, alleged Mr. Gokhale in 1907, “such a bleeding as this..., it is an enormous economic evil.”²⁴

21. Home (Pol.) Deposit, Government of India, File October 1916, No. 29, p. 6.

22. K.L. Dutta, *Report of the Enquiry into the Rise of Prices in India* (Calcutta, 1914), p. 20.

23. Figures cited by Joan Beauchamp, *British Imperialism in India*, (London, Martin Lawrence Ltd., 1934), p. 50.

24. *Speeches of Gopal Krishna Gokhale*, n. 16, pp. 1122-24.

The economic exploitation of India led to the levelling of severe criticism and touching, sensitive, emotional lamentation by the politically conscious Indian elements. They alleged that their long-standing self-sufficient economies were undermined and dissolved. The aim of production changed from self-sufficiency and direct consumption to the market and profit and there was left very little scope for free and full development of Indian economy. It was transformed into a dependent complementary. Shri Aurobindo alleged:

India... is an asset in the hands of injustice throughout the world. Capitalists from every part of the globe flock to India and are provided with every facility to exploit her in the interest of the plutocracy of the world.... So long as this country... remains the dumping ground for all sorts of foreign goods, so long as the children of the soil are not granted that preferential treatment which is only their right, unscrupulous wealth will continue to have an advantage which will considerably handicap the friends of labour in their efforts to bring competence to every man. The wealth of Ormuz and Ind transported to countries where its obligations are not enforced by a spiritual scheme of life, had considerably obstructed the diffusion of happiness amongst mankind. If accumulation of wealth in a few hands is a curse against which an enlightened section of humanity has at last set its face, then they should complete their propaganda by seeking to stop a fertile source of this evil as foreign overlordship.²⁵

Besides, the commercial bourgeoisie who constituted a numerous and significant nucleus in the urban centres was very much antagonized. There was not the slightest disagreement of theirs with the popularly prevailing anti-imperialist feeling that the colonialists had deprived them of a large portion of their commercial profits and obstructed indigenous industrial development, which in turn kept them

25. Haridas Mukherjee & Uma Mukherjee, *Sri Aurobindo and the New Thought in Indian Politics*, a collection of his writings along with biographical account (Calcutta, 1958), p. 138.

at a distance from accumulating their depleted profits from trade. It should also not be forgotten that speedily growing colonial exploitation of India also paved the way for the worsening of the economic status of a large number of commercial bourgeoisie and middlemen, and, above all, of course, those of small position. The existing fulcrum of commerce was gravely threatened not only by the newly developing means of transport controlled by a foreign administrative apparatus, but also by the speedy penetration of large primarily alien commercial houses engaged in importing and exporting transactions. Different sections of indigenous traders in various provinces, mostly petty-bourgeois traders, were being deprived of their trade transactions, with resultant material loss. A contemporary Indian economist admitted in the course of an investigation with the rising prices before the advent of World War I that "on the whole, except the large exporting and importing firms whose volume of business and earnings have expanded immensely, smaller traders are not as well off as before."²⁶

In the period under study, the petty-bourgeois and middle trading bourgeois groups of the cities proved one of the significant active elements of the freedom struggle. Innumerable instances of their activity in all sorts of anti-imperialist engagements can be cited. Besides, they also fought to redress their local economic grievances—a fact that resulted, in a big way, in fanning anti-imperialist feelings. Most often they acted against the rising internal taxes. For example, in December 1906, the petty-bourgeois shopkeepers in Sialkot (of the then undivided Punjab) dealing in the sale of textiles, vegetables, iron and metal pots and non-vegetarian diets closed their business centres, went on strike in protest against the doubling of taxes. A mass protest meeting was also held.²⁷ Likewise, the proposed revision of taxes on the sale of foodgrains, coal and other necessities of domestic consumption provoked a mass unrest in Delhi. A large public meeting of 5,000 citizen expressed discontent with the municipal authorities.²⁸ In the city of Ahmedabad, 4,000

26. K.L. Dutta, *Report on the Enquiry into the Rise of Prices in India*, n. 22, p. 172.

27. *Times of India*, 15 December 1906, p. 15.

28. *Ibid.*, 30 March 1907, p. 9.

petty-bourgeois shopkeepers and traders presented a petition to the local municipal authorities indicating their indignation against the rise in taxation.²⁹ Similar movement and agitations were frequently visible in other towns, giving impetus to anti-imperialist feeling among the inhabitants of the cities.

Years of Boom During War

However, the year 1916 during World War I proved a boom both for Indian and British bourgeoisie. The Commissioner of Berar in the Central Provinces reported that the price of cotton promised to be extraordinarily high that year; the Bombay prices were about 75 per cent higher than at the same time the previous year. Advance contracts were then being made at a price which meant a further rise during the ensuing cold weather.³⁰ In the fortnightly report on the internal political situation in Madras Presidency for the first half of July 1917, it was stated that slight rises under cotton were reported from Coimbatore and Ramnad but in Madras the market was still unsteady.³¹

On the other hand, in the same year the prices of wheat had risen from 10 seers 10 chataks to 9 seers 12 chataks in the N.W.F.P. and Punjab due to export. It was selling at 9¾ seers in Sargodha, and 10¼ seers in Lyallpur; the rates of gram at these centres were 13, 12¾ and 12¼ seers respectively.³² While there was an overall increase of 4 per cent in the price of general foodgrains; at the same time the phenomenal increase of 38 per cent in the price of wheat was marked at the end of December 1916.³³ Likewise, gram rose considerably in all the provinces.³⁴

But the government took certain steps to promote British trade. In Malabar the upward tendency with regard to copra and cocoanut oil was converted into a general fall and the

29. Ibid.

30. Home (Pol.) Deposit, Government of India, File October 1917, No. 2, p. 4; October 1916, No. 29, p. 13.

31. Home (Pol.) Deposit, Govt. of India, August 1917, No. 2, p. 1.

32. Home (Pol.) Deposit, Govt. of India, October 1917, No. 2, p. 4.

33. The Indian Review (Madras), January 1916, Vol. XVII, p. 59, col. 2.

34. Ibid.

price of coir yarn declined simultaneously. The local Collector anticipated a further fall and was somewhat apprehensive of possible results. He stated that so far there was little indication of want of local trouble if the export of coir yarn continued to be prohibited since a large proportion of the coast population were dependent on the coir industry and local firms had already ceased to buy.³⁵

Exploitation of Masses

While the bourgeoisie was making, as already shown, enormous profits, the suffering of the people was aggravated by the recurrent famines (22 in a period of 42 years) affecting particularly densely populated areas, which also brought in their train plague and other epidemic diseases.³⁶ In his fortnightly report submitted to the Home Department on 17 July 1917 it was stated by the Chief Secretary to the Government of Bombay that the agricultural situation was causing anxiety especially in the Deccan and the Southern parts of the Bombay Presidency where very little rain had fallen during the previous fortnight.³⁷ On other occasions the rainfall had been very heavy, resulting in floods which did a great damage to standing crops. Sometimes there had also been cyclones which brought havoc to the people destroying their mud houses and killing many.³⁸ In the report on the political situation in Bengal for the second half of September 1916 was stated that heavy rain had fallen throughout the Presidency, and a cyclonic storm which occurred on 21-22 September resulted in floods in the rivers Damodar and Ajai which traversed the Burdwan Division. The extent of the damage to crops in this area was ascertained to be heavy.³⁹

This was, however, not the end of the people's troubles. As is evident from the 1901 census figures, the biggest numerous class in India in those days used to be the peasantry.

35. Home (Pol.) Deposit, Govt. of India, August 1927, No. 2, p. 1.

36. For further study See A.I. Levkovsky, n. 1, pp. 320-21.

37. Home (Pol.) Deposit, Govt. of India, October 1917, No. 2, p. 7.

38. For further study see the *Fortnightly Reports*, Home (Pol.) Deposit, Govt. of India, File 1916, Nos. 25, 29 etc.

39. Home (Pol.) Deposit, October 1916, No. 29.

Due to the introduction of the new economic system there took place an extensive stratification of the agrarian population. While on the one hand, the agrarian society comprised feudal or semi-feudal landlords, absentee landlords and rich farmers whose strength was not much numerically, on the other hand, there were poor peasants, tenants, semi-serfs and labourers whose number increased by leaps and bounds with the stabilization of the new economic system.⁴⁰ The historic tendency in the economic sphere of the agrarian sector was towards increasing pauperization of these agrarian classes. Quite a substantial share of agrarian products was appropriated by the feudal lords, money-lenders and merchants. There also took place a large-scale fragmentation of holdings under cultivation and ceaseless litigation. The actual tillers of the soil had no protection against the rapacity of the zamindars, who lived in the big cities while the tenants worked on the farms extracting a bare pittance from the land. Poverty was rampant among them. In his speech delivered at Madras on 4 February 1902, after his return from England Romesh C. Dutt, a retired civil servant, pointed out:

Never in India's history were the mass of people more resourceless... more indebted.... Never were greater misfortunes and deaths crowded together within so brief a space. Never did a civilised, fertile, and industrious country present a scene of more widespread poverty and desolation.⁴¹

40. It may be recalled that the new economic system did not provide much security to the working class also. Following the traditional bourgeois pattern of extracting *absolute surplus value* the propertied classes—both foreign and Indian—primarily concentrated on the exploitation of the proletariat. Accordingly, the inauguration of the twentieth century saw the working day reach the greatest length of time in the history of factories. The workers were compelled to “toil from dawn to dark, and sometimes even longer.” How mercilessly they were exploited can be gauged from the length of the working day in various industries. [For further study see A.I. Levkovsky, n. 1, pp. 332-34 and 338.]

41. *Speeches and Papers on the Indian Question* (Calcutta, R.P. Mitra, 1904), p. 159.

Likewise, in his Presidential address delivered at the Bengal Political Conference in 1917 C.R. Das lamented over the destitution of the peasantry:

Today that peasant has gone—his very breed extinct; gone too is that household with its ordered and peaceful economy of life. The granaries are empty of their golden wealth; the kine are dry and give no milk; the field once so green, are dry and even the plough cattle have to be sold in order to give us some poor and meagre sustenance. The tanks have dried up; their water has become blackish and unwholesome! and the peasant has lost his natural freshness and gaiety of temperament.... Though the land is there, its life has fled, the nation is there, but its soul is dead.⁴²

The rising social contradiction of labour and the ascendancy of the power of money and the market were bound to culminate in disastrous consequences on the peasantry. Not only did rents greatly increased but a large number of peasants lost the land they had once owned. In a public speech Gokhale brought home this naked reality when he pointed out that one-third of the agriculturists lost their land and remained on it merely as “the serfs of the money-lenders.”⁴³ In certain provinces this had hither and thither begun to manifest as early as the latter half of the previous century. In the Bombay Presidency,

...about half of the best land... passed to the ownership of the Bania (moneylender). And the previous owner or some tenant for whom he has been ejected

42. *Deshbandhu Chitta Ranjan Das*: a collection of his speeches and writings (Calcutta), pp. 408&442

In a speech delivered at a largely attended public meeting of the inhabitants of Bombay on 15 July 1893 Gokhale lamented over the fact, “The Government has shut its eyes to the misery of the poor peasant who toils and moils from dawn to dark only to find himself badly clothed and worse fed.” [*Speeches of Gokhale*, n. 16, p. 838.]

43. *Indian Financial Statement for 1906-1907* (London, 1907), p. 163.

now pays from two to five times the amount of the Government assessment as rent to Bania. ⁴⁴

This preposterous increase in the power of the village moneylender catalogued not only the growing exploitation of the agriculturists by the feudal lords, but also the wealth-acquirement of the Indian trading and moneylending capitalists. A renowned British economist, Lee-Smith, calculated, for example, that in 1902-03 Indian moneylenders and bankers owned Rs. 950,000,000 in capital and that their annual revenue from the capital amounted to Rs. 190,000,000. ⁴⁵

The accumulation of commercial and moneylending capital was the manifestation of a dual and contradictory process: the intensified process of imperialist and feudal exploitation on the one side, and the preliminary phase of the broad development of the lower forms of Indian capital, on the other. The owners of that capital were closely associated with the imperialists to exploit the poor peasant of the country. "The world takes", wrote Sir Daniel M. Hamilton while reviewing this pitiable and pathetic condition of Indian peasants, "the surplus crops, the *sowcar* (moneylender) and trader takes the money and the devil takes the people." ⁴⁶

Romesh C. Dutt was one of those few members of the educated class who took keen interest and worked in the cause of the peasantry. He addressed a series of letters on the land tax in the different provinces of India to Lord Curzon in 1900. He considered it a question of "life and death" to the Indian cultivator. "The impoverishment of an Indian Province under British administration is", he complained, "a more serious calamity than any defeat or disaster which had been known in the history of British rule in India." ⁴⁷

44. *Times of India*, 18 February 1905, p. 10.

45. *Ibid.*, 26 December 1908, p. 2.

46. D.M. Hamilton, "India: The Present and her Future", *Calcutta Review* (The Calcutta General Publishing Co., 1916), p. 295.

47. R.C. Dutta, *Open Letters to Lord Curzon* (Calcutta, R.P. Mitra, 1904), p. 29. For further study on the problem see Michael Edwardes, *High Noon of Empire; India under Curzon*, (London, 1965), pp. 30-32.

In his letters he also suggested certain reforms to be introduced in the agrarian system of India. In his speeches delivered in England he told his gatherings that in ancient days "the land belonged to the nation, not to any privileged class."⁴⁸ But after the establishment of British rule the "ancient form of village self-government" had "unfortunately perished under the too centralised system of British administration.... Landlords have taken the place of these communities."⁴⁹

After the establishment of British rule there came into existence the arbitrary enhancement of land tax without right of appeal to the courts. Its results were declared to be very harmful to the peasants. In his second reply to Lord Curzon's Land Resolution in March 1902 Mr. Romesh C. Dutt pointed out:

The cultivators paying the land tax live in a state of perpetual uncertainty, they do not know on what grounds the state will claim enhancement at the next settlement, they do not comprehend to what extent the enhancement will be made.... In the recent Malabar settlement, the assessment was raised 85 per cent at Palghat, 55 per cent at Calicut, 84 per cent at Kurumbranad, and 105 per cent at Wananadu. Such enhancements... must deaden agricultural enterprise and keep the cultivating population in a state of chronic poverty.⁵⁰

In another letter R.C. Dutt pleaded for the removal of the rule according to which was being realized half the net produce as land revenue. He suggested one-fifth of the gross produce as land revenue. In the opinion of the forces of nationalist regeneration the failure of the British administration had become conspicuous by the presence of an apathetic attitude in contemplating the economic condition of the people of India. "No impartial observer in India, no unprejudiced critic" wrote Romesh Dutt, "can think of the

48. *Speeches and Papers on Indian Question*, n. 41, p. 71.

49. *Ibid.*, p. 72.

50. *Ibid.*, p. 186.

wretched and almost universal poverty of the vast population of India without a feeling of misery and sorrow or can read of the frequent and fatal famines of that country without a feeling of pain and of humiliation.”⁵¹ In utter despair and frustration emerging out of this devastating phenomenon Deshbandhu recalled the gaiety of life of the peasant in ancient India.⁵²

The bad economic conditions were very congenial to the growth of great mass discontent in the poor agrarian population. It provided a social basis for the building up and organizing of a powerful peasants’ movement (like Champaran, Bardoli) all over the country. Gradually this moment became an integral part of the overall nationalist movement engaged in the liberation of the country from British domination. The mass of the peasants joined the nationalist movement because they considered the alien regime the ally of the feudal lords and moneylenders who exploited them. The grievances of the peasantry were vigorously championed by the nationalist-minded intelligentsia. Lala Lajpat Rai stated:

His income is not sufficient for the elemental needs of himself and those who are dependent on him. Nor has the landlord any right to squeeze all he can out of starving cultivators, regardless of the fact that what is left is sufficient for him and his family or not. Down with the foolish doctrine of demand and supply. Down with the competition. We insist that the Government of India, whether manned by the British or by the Indian so change the land laws as to secure a sufficient holding to every tiller of the soil on terms which will enable him to live a decent life.⁵³

The intelligentsia started organizing the peasants and labourers for economic purposes. It appeared to be their firm conviction that organisation of India on the economic

51. Ibid., p. 86-7.

52. For further study see *Deshbandhu Chitta Ranjan Das*, n. 42, p. 40.

53. Lajpat Rai, *The Call to Young India* (Madras, 1920), p. 86.

level was the necessary base for their political action. And in order to provide incentive to the lower classes, especially the peasantry, for organizing themselves into a strong active movement the intelligentsia started eulogizing the virtues and qualities of their character. ⁵⁴

Home Charges

There was still another economic sphere where India sustained a great financial loss due to its unnatural political position. The state apparatus introduced by the British regime was one of the chief weapons for the slavery and exploitation of Indian people. The enormous sums of money the British colonialists extorted in the shape of taxes were spent for both preserving the alien regime and for direct transfer to England. Nearly a fourth in 1901-02 and a third⁵⁵ of this huge sum in 1911-12 found its way to England in the shape of the so-called "Home charges". The so-called annual liabilities in England had been thus classified by the Indian Expenditure Commission:

The interest and management of debt, and interest and annuities payable to railway companies; Payments due in England on account of the civil administration of India; Postal subsidy and telegraph charges; Payments to the Admiralty for naval services in India; Charges for the Persian mission, and diplomatic and consular establishments for China; Charges of the India Office; Payments to the War Office on account of the Home charges of British troops serving or having served in India; Payments for the transport of troops to and from India; Payments for stores for India; Furlough pay to officers on leave from India; Pensions of retired officers and their families.⁵⁶

Of the 17-1/3 million sterling spent in England against revenue in 1901-02, about two million was for civil pensions,

54. For further study see *Ibid.*, pp. 136-37.

55. For further study see *Speeches of Gopal Krishna Gokhale*, n. 16, p. 699.

56. *Moral and Material Progress and Condition of India, 1901-02* (London, India Office, 1902), p. 142.

4-1/3 million for army services, effective and non-effective about £ 180,000 for the establishment of the Secretary of State, and more than half a million sterling for stores other than those intended for the army or those purchased out of railway capital. These charges constituted the home expenditure on revenue account, but there were also other disbursements, such as capital outlay on account of railways and irrigation works, the discharge of debt, payments to railway companies on capital account, and the remittance account which brought up the total disbursements in England to £ 30,337,283 in 1901-02. The receipts of the Secretary of State were composed of the weekly sales of bills on India, the capital deposited by railway companies, temporary and other loans, and miscellaneous receipts. The amount received by the Secretary of India in 1901-02 by the sale of Bills was £ 18,539,000.⁵⁷ It will be seen from the table which gives the revenue and expenditure in England under the main heads that in 1911-12 the net expenditure in England chargeable on the revenues of the year amounted to £ 18,865,246. The distribution of this total, and of the corresponding total in 1901-02 ⁵⁸ alongwith the total for 1917-18 ⁵⁹ is shown below:

| | 1901-02 | 1911-12 | 1917-18 |
|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------|------------|---------|
| | £ | £ | £ |
| Interest and management on debt and payment of interest and annuities on account of railways and irrigation | 9,387,041 | 10,768,753 | |
| Payments in connection with Civil Departments in India | 254,276 | 233,672 | |

57. Ibid.

58. *Moral and Material Progress and Condition of India during the year 1911-12 and the nine precedings years*, No. 48 (London, India office, 1913), p. 160.

It may be recalled that the figures of the Home charges went on increasing year after year. For instance, in 1862 the total Home charges of India were only a little over two million sterling. In 1893 they were close upon 5 millions. [*Speeches of Gokhale*, n. 16, p. 833.]

59. *Moral and Material Progress... for the year 1917-18* (London, India office, 1919), p. 169.

| | | | |
|----------------------------------------------------|-------------------|------------------|-------------------|
| India Office (Excluding pensions) | 176,583 | 184,780 | |
| Army and marine effective charges | 225,977 | 1,016,597 | |
| Stores of all kinds charged against revenue | 1,993,174 | 1,191,371 | |
| Furlough allowances | 615,922 | 988,863 | |
| Non-effective charges (Pensions and gratuities...) | 4,224,476 | 4,481,129 | |
| Total | 16,877,447 | 8,865,246 | 20,000,000 |

Besides, there were miscellaneous civil charges, i.e. the nature of the charges shown under this head is indicated by the table⁶⁰, which shows the net expenditure under each head at the beginning and end of the decade.

| | 1901-02 £ | 1911-12 £ |
|---------------------------------------|------------------|------------------|
| Territorial and Political Pensions | 264,371 | 227,061 |
| Civil furlough and absentee allowance | 247,752 | 425,742 |
| Superannuation allowance and pensions | 2,530,773 | 2,985,950 |
| Stationary and Printing | 470,806 | 572,800 |
| Miscellaneous | 93,325 | 20,109 |
| Total | 3,607,027 | 4,191,444 |

The figures (except those for territorial and political pensions) show a gradual increase. The most important item is the charge for superannuation allowances and pensions. It may be noted that the gross disbursements in India under this head in 1901-02 amounted to 28 per cent of the total (the rest being disbursed in England) and in 1911-12 constituted 36 per cent.⁶¹

To all this was to be added a portion at least of the annual savings of European merchants, lawyers, doctors and

60. *Moral and Material Progress... for the year 1911-12*, p. 159.

61. *Ibid.*

such other persons, as the predominant position of the Englishman in India conferred upon these classes special benefits which their Indian competitors or counterparts were not in a position to enjoy.

"National" Debt

Moreover, the colonial authorities also posed the problem of the so-called "National Debt" or the permanent funded debt. This comprised not only the unproductive debt due on account of the wars and famines of past years, but also all the capital spent by the Government on productive railways and irrigation works. These two classes of liabilities were, however, treated separately in the accounts. The service of the productive debt was charged to the railway revenue account or to irrigation, and it was only the interest and charges on the "ordinary" debt which appeared, with some other items under the heading "Debt Services". In 1862, according to a calculation made by the Indian Expenditure Commission of 1900, the ordinary debt of India consisted of £ 36½ million sterling plus 59¾ crores of rupees, while the "productive" debt, which was not then separately treated stood at about 3.5 crores of rupees. If, for the purpose of comparison, the rupee figures are expressed in £1=Rs. 15, the ordinary debt in 1862 appeared as £ 76,000,000, and the productive debt as £ 2,400,000. At the end of the year 1901-02 the ordinary debt amounted to £ 69,167,015—and the productive debt to £ 138,600,997.⁶² There had in fact been, on the whole, a diminution of the ordinary debt which was a dead weight on the revenues of India, This was due largely to the transfer of debt from the ordinary to the productive category.

At the end of September 1918, the national debt amounted £ 370 millions, or about £ 1-10 s. per head of the population, as compared with a total public revenue of about £ 110 millions.⁶³ When the war began, almost the whole of India's debt represented productive outlay on railways and irrigation, normally yielding a return which exceeded considerably

62. Ibid., p. 143.

63. *Moral and Material Progress and Condition in India during the year 1917-18*, n. 60, p. 84.

not only interest on the amount borrowed, but also interest on the small debt classified as unproductive. Even after India's £ 1000 millions contribution to the cost of the war, which added over 30 per cent to the "national debt", the revenue from productive expenditure exceeded the total interest charges by 33 per cent.⁶⁴ Had it not been for the gift, the ordinary debt would have been completely wiped out in 1917; and in March 1918, the amount of the ordinary debt outstanding was actually £ 11 millions less than the contribution itself. But such a display of leniency would not have served the interests of imperial authorities.

At the end of November 1919, the national debt amounted to about £ 378 millions, or about £ 1-11 s. per head of population as compared with a total public revenue of £ 123 millions.⁶⁵

Military Expenditure

Another item of economic burden that always engaged the attention of the nationalist forces more than any other problem was the question of military expenditure by the alien regime. It became the "octopus of Indian finance".⁶⁶

The increase of the military expenditure from 1857 to 1907 can be gauged from the following table: ⁶⁷

| Year | Amount |
|---------|----------------------|
| 1857 | Nearly Rs. 11 crores |
| 1884-85 | „ Rs. 18 „ |
| 1902-03 | „ Rs. 28 „ |
| 1906-07 | „ Rs. 33 „ |

64. Ibid.

65. *Moral and Material Progress and Condition in India during 1919*, p. 62.

66. Speech by D.E. Wacha delivered in annual session of the Indian National Congress held in December 1911, *Report of the Annual Session held in 1911* (Karachi, 1911), p. 102.

67. *Report of the 1908 annual session of the Indian National Congress*, p. 94.

Thus it annually consumed nearly half — a very large proportion—of the revenue. It was a question in which every unit of the Indian population was deeply interested because it affected all — rich and poor, prince and peasant, Raja and ryot, and middleman and merchant. Men of eminence among the nationalists criticised it in no measured terms. “What heightens the injustice”, charged G.A. Natesan in the 1906 Session of the Indian National Congress, “is this —that you do war for your own display, but you put the expenditure on our heads.”⁶⁸

A large share of the military expenditure was incurred on military expeditions to the North-West and Himalayan regions. During his Viceroyalty Lord Curzon conducted the famous expeditions to Tibet and Kabul. The expenditure incurred on these expeditions came to be strongly censured by the people. There was a consensus that it was not fair to burden India with the entire cost of the Tibetan expedition, especially as it was considered an *Imperial* rather than a purely Indian concern. The conduct of Colonel Younghusband in exceeding the scope of the expedition fixed by the British Ministry also called forth severe condemnation. Protesting against the cost of the expedition which was to be charged from the Indian tax-payer an Indian journal, *Advocate* observed, “This is one more illustration of the fact that India under British rule has always to play the tune.”⁶⁹ The *Indian People* asked why India alone should pay a crore and twenty-five lakhs of rupees for “this questionable enterprise”, and when the famished Indian ryots had not prayed to Government “that they should be starved so that Tibetans might be slaughtered and partially deprived of their independence.” The same paper wound up with the remarks that the Government of India deserved severe censure in the matter at least as much as its “self-willed” servant, Colonel Younghusband, who certainly deserved a greater punishment than “censure coupled with the title of K.C.I.E.”⁷⁰

68. *Report of the proceedings of the annual session of the Indian National Congress held in December 1906*, (Calcutta, 1906), p. 56.

69. *Memorandum of the native owned newspapers published in English, anglo-vernacular languages, in U.P. during the year 1905; Home Public-B, Progs. June 1906, no. 104, (Confdt), p. 8.*

70. *Ibid.*

The Kabul Mission also gave rise to some very virulent expressions of public opinion. The *Indian People* complained that the people of India had no place in the economy of the British Empire, except as "milch cows", and yet by virtue of their total exclusion from the Councils of Government and their helplessness to effectively make themselves heard and respected, they were simply "dragged at the chariot wheels of rampant British imperialism of the Chamberlain-Milner-Curzon type and were made to pay out of their no means full pockets, (so) that one after another the Asiatic Kingdoms, with which they sympathized, might be subjugated by the diplomatic Western powers...; the poor Indian ryot, in whose endless capacity for being bled the Government of India seemed to have infinite faith, had to pay an enormous amount on account of this abortive Dance Mission" (to Kabul).⁷¹

Similarly the *Advocate* complained that in the foreign policy of India, they (Indians) were simply to hear what others had to say, and whether willing or unwilling to pay the bill.⁷²

During the Viceroyalty of Lord Curzon the pay of the British soldier was raised due to the adoption of the proposals of the Home Government for an increase of 2d. a day from 1 April 1902. This at once affected the Indian economy. There was additionally extracted from Indian revenue a sum of £ 225,000 a year. In April 1904 a further increase of from 4d. to 7d. a day was given in the form of service pay.⁷³ The whole service pay issued in India was, in accordance with the decisions of the Lord Chief Justice, acting as arbitrator between the Imperial and Indian Governments, borne by the latter; the extra charges were being thus raised to about £ 786,000 a year.

From 1 January 1909, in accordance with the intention announced in the Proclamation of the King-Emperor on the

71. *Ibid.*, pp. 8-9.

72. *Ibid.*, p. 8.

73. *Moral and Material Progress and Condition in India during the year 1911-12*, p. 331.

fiftieth anniversary of the transfer of government to the Crown, a general increase of pay for all ranks was granted to the Indian army, and arrangements were made for the free supply of fuel by Government, at a cost of £ 427,000 a year. The increase was Rs. 3 a month for non-commissioned officers and men of the silladar cavalry, and Rs. 2 for other troops. Other measures that might be noticed were the raising of the kit-money granted on enlistment and the introduction of a boot allowance, the grant of free grass to silladar cavalry when on the march or at manoeuvres, and of free passage by rail (within certain limits) for men called home on urgent private affairs--all introduced in 1906; the revision and improvement of the pension rules of the "native" army; and a revision of the rates of pay of captains and subalterns of the Indian army, and of regimental salaries, involving a considerable addition to the emoluments of the junior grades, in 1909.⁷⁵

Finally, mention may be made of the bonus of half a month's pay granted to all non-commissioned officers and men and reservists of both the British and Indian armies, and to the equivalent ranks of the Royal Indian Marine, at the Coronation Durbar in 1911, at a cost of about £ 166,000. It may be recalled that on the occasion of the Coronation Durbar of 1902, a money grant, to be spent at the discretion of officers commanding, was made to all British and native corps.⁷⁶

In 1905, there was imposed 10 million sterling on the Indian budget for the Army Reorganization Scheme. Not a single pie was charged from the Crown Colonies for meeting these expenses.

Besides, the fall of the gold value of the rupee increased the military expenditure of India, namely, by the augmentation of the number of rupees due to the British soldier, who drew his pay in gold, and by the necessity of compensating officers for their diminished receipts.

Then there was the item of so-called effective charges. The most important part of the effective charges in England

74. Ibid., p. 332.

75. For further study see Ibid.

was usually the amount included under "Regimental pay", etc., paid to the Home Government for recruiting, training, and other depot services in respect of British troops sent to India. Under the existing system, which followed the lines laid down by the Lord Northbrook Committee at the beginning of the decade the sum payable was fixed by a capitation rate of £ 7-10s. on every soldier who was sent to join the British army in India, and it was generally about £ 7,000,000; but in 1901-02 owing to deductions on account of previous over-payments and other matters, into which it is not necessary to enter, the payment was only £ 64,000. The Indian Expenditure Commission took the question of the capitation rate into consideration, and reported in 1900 that they saw no reason for immediately revising it, but recommended a general revision at the end of five or six years from that time.⁷⁶

The Army Department also incurred certain other expenditures. They were connected with the Royal Visit and the Delhi Durbar and amounted (including the bonus of pay) to about £ 372,000, while the Abor Expedition cost some £ 124,000, and the arms traffic operations in the Persian Gulf about £ 119,000.⁷⁷

The executive control over the torpedo vessels and gun-boats belonging to the Indian Marine was transferred to the Admiralty in 1901, under an agreement providing for an annual payment to the Imperial Government of £ 61,600. ⁷⁸

Since 1869, India had paid a contribution of varying amounts to the Imperial Government in consideration of services performed by the Royal Navy. Under existing arrangements, which dated from 1896-97 a subsidy of £ 100,000 a year was paid for the unkeep of certain ships of the East India Squadron, which might not be employed beyond prescribed limits except by the consent of the Government of India.⁷⁹

76. *Moral and Material Progress and Condition of India in 1901-02*, P. 285.

77. *Moral and Material Progress and Condition...* 1911-12, p. 328.

78. *Ibid.*, p. 331.

79. *Ibid.*

In its annual session held in 1908 the Indian National Congress entered its emphatic protest against the fresh expense of £ 300,000 which the British War Office levied on the Indian exchequer for military purposes on the recommendations of the Romer Committee. The delegates at the session viewed with feelings of protest the repeated imposition of military charges by the British War Office on the Indian tax-payer from the date of the Army Amalgamation Scheme of 1859. Referring to the expenses recommended by the Romer Committee, Mr. V.V. Gogiah stated that its addition to the military charges "must surely be the veritable last straw that breaks the camel's neck."⁸⁰

It appears that arguments such as the "Russian bogey", "forward policy" or "scientific frontier" put forward by the Government of India failed to convince the nationalist elements about the validity of its military policy. The nationalist elements appeared to be fully aware of the fact that the success of these military policies would mean nothing but the perpetuation and strengthening of alien control over them, which was putting unnatural fetters on the development of their own independent nationhood. In a speech delivered at the 1911 Session of the Indian National Congress, a delegate D.E. Wacha observed:

I am always afraid of their forward policy. They always raise bogeys, sometimes it is Russia, sometimes it is Tibet and the Dalai Lama, and it may be the Emperor of China.... If you want a scientific frontier you will find it is will of the wisp. Today it is Peshawar, tomorrow it is Persia, the next day it may be Samarkand, later on it may be Siberia, and we don't know whether it will not reach the Arctic Ocean. In trying to catch it, the further it goes away from you. Therefore, this military policy should be very much guarded against.⁸¹

The economic clashes between the foreign regime and indigenous forces of national regeneration revealed the nature

80. *Report of 1908 annual session of the Indian National Congress*, p. 95.

81. *Report of 1911 annual session of the Indian National Congress*, p. 64.

of the prevailing political and economic system forcibly imposed upon Indians. The revelation led to the growth of dislike and disapproval of the British Imperial system. It came to be looked upon as a great fetter restricting the free and independent development of Indian nationhood. Lala Lajpat Rai stated:

British imperialism is as *selfish* and *autocratic* as any imperialism in the history of the world ever was or could be.... We should not labour under any apprehension that British "justice" is any way better than any other imperial "justice". In the history of British Empire "justice" was never done to the claims of any dependency or colony, except under extreme pressure and for selfish reasons. Even in the case of South Africa it was more enlightened self-interest than pure unadulterated love of justice that led Sir Henry Campbell Bannerman to grant them Dominion Status.⁸³

War "Contributions"

In 1914 broke out the First World War. It raged with unabated fury manifesting the worst crisis of imperialist systems forcibly imposed by Western Powers over their respective domains in the continents of Africa and Asia. India, being a colony, had to pay a heavy toll in the shape of men and money. Nationalists felt that the Imperial Relief Fund Committee and War Loans Committee and other such committees were there only to forcibly extract contributions from the people or to raise the cotton tariff in order to extort money by backdoor method. Voicing the protest of militant nationalist India Lala Lajpat Rai addressed the following letter to the *Manchester Guardian* :

As an Indian Nationalist, let me offer you my humble tribute of respect and admiration for the stand you have taken in the matter of the "Latest financial contribution of India" towards the war expenses. I do not agree with your views on cotton duties but at least admit this much that it is logical and free from

83. Lala Lajpat Rai, n. 53, p. 107.

the meanness which characterizes the conduct of those who are enhancing the cotton duties as a War measure only, just to disarm the opposition that this scheme of £ 109,000,000 contribution would have evoked in India. Your position is much stronger than that of your other liberal contemporaries who would take the £ 100,000,000 but not increase the duty. Your opposition to cotton duties has two sides. You oppose it as a free trader and in the interest of Lancashire. Perhaps, both are identical. In any case, you have the courage to express your "grave doubts about the wisdom and justice" of exacting the contribution, and to say that the so-called financial contribution is no more the free and spontaneous act of the people of India than any other decision of the Secretary of State for India who rules India from White Hall. It is a decision of the Cabinet and they are responsible for it. The thanks and the gratitude are mere stage acting. The Government of India is only their agent and in no case free to set afloat such big schemes. The people of India have no voice. I agree with you, Sir, that the so-called "act of justice" is a mere delusion. If the authors of the scheme were really earnest about the development of the Indian industries, they could not have imposed this heavy burden on India. The loss of £ 100,000,000 and the recurring annual charge of £ 6,000,000 is the greatest blow that could be dealt to the prospects of Indian industries. The compensation granted in the shape of enhanced duties is a mere delusion and a trap. Personally I would rather take the £ 100,000,000 than take the duties, even if there was a guarantee of their permanence, which under the circumstances there is not. If authors of this scheme know it, as they must, that this is a mere ruse, then this is the biggest political fraud that has been perpetuated on India in many a long day. The people of India know, from their past experience how much reliance to place upon the "love" that the Curzons and Chamberlains have for the "poor" and inarticulate masses of India.

I have no means of knowing how the Indian nationalists and the Indian Press have taken the

present scheme, but I have no hesitation in saying that the decision of the Cabinet to exact this contribution and enhance the duties temporarily is extremely unwise. It involves a political danger which in their anxiety to please the British tax-payer they have not perhaps seen. They saw the danger of exacting the contribution without the sop of an increase in the rate of cotton duties. But they shut their eyes to the possibilities of the greater danger that lurks in the wake of the disillusionment that is sure to come. They have not seen that the disillusionment will be terrible if the duties are abolished or if at any time after the war the excise duty is also brought to their level. But even without that, the disillusionment will come when the Indian have had time to reflect and to calculate their losses and gains; when they discover the trick that has been played on them. If, as you suggest, not without reason, the step has been actuated by a desire to avert political concessions, it is fraught with still greater possibilities of danger. So far, Sir, the *Manchester Guardian* is the only British paper that has spoken manfully and truthfully in the matter, and I beg to congratulate you there upon. The conduct of the Provincial Governments in India is creating a criminal situation there and one cannot help fearing that this new act of Imperial benevolence might cause a wound greater than any caused during the year or before.

The costs are high and wages low. In the language of Anglo-Indian authority the bulk of the Indian people do not live but manage to exist. Thanking you in anticipation for your courtesy in publishing my letter.⁸⁴

According to a confidential report of the Delhi Chief Commissioner, W.M. Hailey, the offers of war subscription came but at a heavy discount. It was stated that they came mainly from persons at certain out-stations who had really

84. Home (Pol.) Deposit, Government of India, June 1917, No. 438-49, pp. 3-4.

needed money for their current business. It was said that the zemindars in a neighbouring district of Delhi were sending in Post Office certificates for sale at a discount of two or three rupees each. There were rumours of considerable numbers of sovereigns being sent to Bombay for melting.⁸⁴

According to a report of the Resident at Hyderabad dated 19 July 1917, to J.B. Wood, Secretary to the Government of India, in the Foreign and Political Department, the Post Office subscription to the War Loan under all heads totalled Rs. 48,227-4-0 for the period from the 29 June to 12 July, both dates inclusive. The savings bank statement for this period showed that the excess of withdrawals over deposits which had marked the returns since the issue of the War Loan, continued; the figures being withdrawals Rs. 31,931-14-10 and deposits Rs. 14,186-11-6, as against Rs. 21,931-4-6 and Rs. 15,773-8-0 for a corresponding period the year before.⁸⁵

On the other hand, the Maharaja of Mysore State left no stone unturned to display his so-called splendid loyalty to British imperialism, but at the cost of his people's welfare. He donated towards the expenses of War an amount of Rs. 50 lakhs which had been earlier collected for expenditure on public works. The British Journal *Round Table* applauded the Maharaja's action as "the beginning of the Homeric list of gifts and contributions".⁸⁶ On the other side, the Maharaja tried to befool the public by stating that "reproductive works and other benefits and advantages of civil life were dependent upon the stability of British rule."⁸⁷

With this prelude one can proceed to that general sketch of war finance which was an essential introduction to the financial problems with which the Imperialist Government had been faced during the period under review. When War broke out, there occurred in India, as elsewhere, a general

84. Home (Pol.) Deposit, Government of India, October 1917, No. 2, p.20.

85. Home (Pol.), Deposit, Government of India, October 1917, No. 2, p. 33.

86. Ibid., p. 1.

87. Ibid.

dislocation of trade and finance. There was a serious run on the savings bank deposits, and some panic encashment of currency notes. There was also a considerable demand for the remittance of money to London; and to maintain the exchange value of the rupee, sterling drafts on London to the extent of £ 8½ millions had to be sold between August 1914 and January 1915. This open want of confidence in the Imperialist system, left as a legacy £ 14 millions of debt, of which £ 7 millions was met from the gold standard reserve, and 7 millions raised in India Bills by the Secretary of the State.⁸⁸

In the post-War phase the British Imperialists embarked upon devising a new economic policy in order to make the so-called energetic exploitation of the immense economic resources of the tropical and colonial countries by a system of profit-sharing partnership between the State and private bourgeois firms. It had, in fact, been forced upon colonial rulers by the imperious obligations which the prolonged period of war had placed upon the British Exchequer. An economic expert, Edgar Crammond, in a speech to the Institute of Bankers in London, calculated the total cost of the World War I at £ 52,000 millions; of this more than £ 25,000 millions had to be borne by the Allies.⁸⁹

It may be recalled that on 1 February 1919 the net amount of British national debt was £ 6,099 millions, and the interest and sinking fund charges might be estimated at £ 350 millions annually. The pre-War national debt of Britain was £ 650 millions and the annual charge on it was £ 24½ millions only. One can, therefore, see that the war had added £ 5450 millions to the national debt, and £ 325 millions to the annual charge.⁹⁰

To meet this difficult situation the Imperial Exchequer was put to great strain. The colonialists, therefore, had been

88. *Moral and Material Progress and Condition in India during the year 1917-18*, p. 70.

89. Cited by Bipin Chandra Pal, *The New Economic Menace to India* (Madras, Ganesh & Co., 1920), p. 144.

90. Figures cited by Bipin Chandra Pal, *Ibid.*, p. 145.

at work seeking to discover the most beneficial means of meeting the obligations of the war. Where they could turn their attention except to embark upon a ruthless exploitation of their colonies like India. The setting up of "Empire Resources Development Committee" was nothing but a device to meet the obligations of the War.

Auction of Taj Mahal

It will be equally painful to recall that at the earlier stages of establishment and consolidation of British rule in India when Imperial Exchequer had been put to the strain of bankruptcy due to heavy military expenditure, the colonial rulers secretly planned to auction important historical monuments. One such attempt, as revealed by Lord Curzon himself in his speech delivered on 7 February 1900 at a meeting of Asiatic Society of Bengal, was made in the Viceroyalty of Lord William Bentick. It is said that in order to meet the budget deficit in 1828 Lord Bentick on the suggestion of some British traders ordered to raze Taj Mahal over which every Indian prided as one of the seven wonders of the world, to the ground and auction its white sandstone. He had already auctioned Shahjahan's bathing tank, known as *machhali kund* in Agra's Red Fort. However, when it was found that the collection of Taj marble by razing the the monument to the ground would be costlier than the price sought, it was decided to make a direct auction of the building. In July 1831 a royal announcement⁹¹ was made through drum-beat all over the country inviting the rich to make a bidding:

खलक खुदा का, मुलक अंग्रेज बादशाह का, हुकुम कम्पनी
बहादुर का, सब लोग रुक कर सुनते जाओ। कम्पनी बहादुर का
हुकुम है कि...दिन दोपहर ११ बजे ताज बीबी का रोजा
नीलाम होगा। जिस किसी को बोली बोल कर खरीदना हो,
वह ताज के सदर दरवाजे पर हाजिर रहे-ए-ए।

It was, however, the bad luck of British colonialists that on the appointed day no body could bid beyond Rs. 15 mill-

1. *Nav Bharat Times*, Sunday edition, magazine section (New Delhi), 16 April 1972, p 1, col. 1.

ions while they aspired to sell the Taj at an auction of Rs. 20 millions—a price much below the estimated cost of Rs. 70 millions incurred in constructing the monument.⁹² After some time another attempt was made but with no results. Finally, the idea had to be abandoned because the clouds of 1857 War of Independence were hovering over the Indian horizon. The British rulers tried, however, to resolve the economic crisis by the removal of precious pearls and stones⁹³ from the historic buildings and selling them in foreign markets. Strange were the methods of colonial exploitation! They had gone to the extent of showing utter disregard and even contempt to the national sentiments.

92. For further study see Ibid.

93. For further study see Ibid, sunday edition, magazine section, 23 April 1972, p. 2, cols. 1-5.

CHAPTER IV

ECONOMIC NATIONALISM

B—Swadeshi and Boycott Movement

There is not a single caste or clan in any province, district or division of India, amongst whom Swadeshism has not become the ruling passion, as the only means of safeguarding the country from the annihilating effects of famines and plagues. This idea of self-help, self-respect and self-preservation has become the strongest, and any attempt against it is felt as an attempt at their very life. Thousands, nay, tens of thousands of naked people are collecting themselves around it in this terrible cold session to warm themselves with the real or supposed heat of this sacred fire. Try not to extinguish it, therefore, as they love it and propose to live by it....The great Hindu and Mohamedan problem has been solved in this.

[Pandit Rambhaji Datta Chaudhri, "The Swadeshi Movement", *The Indian Review* (Madras, 1907) Vol. VIII, p. 436.]

Awakening of Swadeshi Spirit

No less significant contribution to the growth of nationalism in India was made by the Swadeshi Movement which became a dynamic force mainly because of the reluctance of the British regime to respond favourably to the demand of the Bengalee people to abate the partition of their province.¹

1. It was in fact during the last quarter of the previous century, i.e., the period symbolizing the beginning of the growth of Indian capitalism that the first scattered swadeshi activities were observed

The spirit of Swadeshi showed not only the people's disapproval of the economic domination of their country by the British bourgeoisie but also heralded the growth of Indian capitalism which was so far in rudimentary form. Above all, it also inculcated the spirit of nationality in petty-bourgeois intellectuals and the masses both of whom constituted the most decisive force of the national liberation struggle. The growth of this phenomenon was reflected in the speeches and writings of the intellectual vanguard engaged in the reconstruction of their country. For instance, Iswara Saran, a delegate to the annual session of the Indian National Congress held in December 1908,

in various parts of the country. Those activities heralded the inauguration of the new phase of the independence movement and were among the factors that stimulated its popularization. From the very first the Swadeshi Movement gave help to local industries primarily by encouraging Indians to buy the goods manufactured in their own country, one of its basic platforms. Since its inception the trend of Swadeshi was anti-imperialistic. Slowly but steadily it went on growing and perfecting its techniques until, in 1905-8, it assumed the first important shape of mass anti-imperialist action. In that period Swadeshi assumed a scope and breadth of character such as it had never acquired before. Thus the Swadeshi Movement had been closely linked with the struggle for independence ever since the close of the nineteenth century. Tracing its history a Bombay bourgeoisie, Lalubhai Samaldas wrote in 1905:

The Swadeshi movement is one of long standing. This movement was initiated in Gujarat and Deccan more than thirty years ago. It was then proposed to start Swadeshi stores to initiate a few industries. After a few years, the enthusiasm for the movement gradually waned, and very little is heard of Swadeshi as such in GujaratIn the Deccan also the movement, though not quite dead, was till now in moribund condition. [*The Times of India*, 21 October 1905, p. 1]

The other Indian traders including Harekishan Lal and public men like Subramania Iyer also corroborated the fact. According to Dadabhai Naoroji, reports started reaching England as early as 1880 that people in Western India were singing songs of protest against the ruin of Indian industries and trades. Naoroji warned the London Government that if the economic retrogression perpetuated, the movement against British goods might grow into a movement against British rule as well.

[For further study see A. I. Levkovsky, "Begining of Mass Liberation struggle", M. Reisner and N. M. Goldberg, ed, *Tilak and Struggle for Indian Freedom* (New Delhi, People's Publishing House, 1966), P. 348.]

believed that Swadeshi was another name for nationalism. He had stated: "This is part and parcel of a great wave of nationalism which is sweeping over many nations of Asia at the present day."² An expression of similar sentiments can be traced in the writings of Babu Surendra Nath Banerjea and Lala Lajpat Rai who had strong faith in the successful operation and culmination of the Swadeshi Movement. It was an index of all sacrifices for them. Babu Surendra Nath Banerjea stated in December, 1906:

Swadeshism is based upon the love of country...; our object is to popularise the use of indigenous articles, to foster the growth and development of indigenous arts and industries and to safeguard the country against the growing evils of impoverishment.³

To Lala Lajpat Rai also appeared the solution of national problems in its promotion. He appealed to his countrymen to make themselves self-respecting, self-reliant, self-sacrificing and above all, manly. He observed:

I am an out and out Swadeshist and have been so for the last 25 years. For me the words Swadeshi and patriotism are synonymous.⁴

To intensify the progress of the Swadeshi Movement nationalist-minded intellectuals endeavoured to inculcate a new fervour and zeal among the general people. In their speeches and writings they eulogized the manufacture of Swadeshi goods as a great service to the cause of the "motherland". They called Swadeshi a mighty protest against India's industrial subjection. To provide a stimulus to the forces of national regeneration Mr. Gokhale, in poetic language inserted in his presidential address delivered at the

2. *Report of the 1908 annual session of the Indian National Congress*, p. 91.

3. *Speeches and Writings of Surendra Nath Banerjea* (Madras, G. A. Natesan), pp. 296-97.

4. Lajpat Rai, "The Swadeshi Movement", *The Indian Review* (Madras, 1907) Vol. VIII, p. 335.

Indian National Congress in 1905, proclaimed that the ideal of Swadeshi or "one's own country" was one of the noblest conceptions that had ever stirred humanity. To him the encouragement to Swadeshi appeared to be a very valuable work. Those who undertook it were fully entitled to say that they were engaged in a patriotic mission. He stated further:

The devotion to motherland, which is enshrined in the highest *Swadeshi* is an influence so profound and so passionate that its very thought thrills and its actual touch lifts one out of oneself. India needs today above every thing else that the gospel of this devotion should be preached to high and low, to prince and to peasant, in town and in hamlet, till the service of motherland, becomes with us as over-mastering a passion as it is in Japan.⁵

The leaders also pointed out that it was Swadeshi which brought nationalism in the comprehensive approach of the masses. It turned their thoughts to their country and made them habituated to the idea of voluntarily doing work for the country's sake, inculcated their interest in economic development and taught them the significant fact of combining for a national purpose. These national leaders were also emphatic enough in saying that if the people wanted India to prosper they should endeavour to establish the factories after the pattern of the highly developed countries of Western Europe and America. This would obviously be a landmark in industrial regeneration throughout the country. The Hindi poet Maithili Sharan Gupta, who gave an articulate expression to the national aspirations in his probably unique poetry of patriotism *Bharat-Bharati*, exhorted:⁶

अब तो उठो, हे बन्धुओ ! निज देश की जय बोल दो
बनने लगे सब वस्तुये, कल कारखाने खोल दो ।
जावे यहां से और कच्चा माल अब बाहर नहीं—
हो "मेड इन" के बाद बस अब "इण्डिया" ही सब कहीं ॥⁶

5. *The Indian National Congress*, a collection of presidential addresses delivered at the annual sessions (Madras, G. A. Natesan & Co.) pp. 832-33.

6. Maithali Sharan Gupta, *Bharat-Bharati* (Chirgaon, Sahitya Sadan, 25th ed.), p. 168.

In an aspiration of fostering an industrial "awakening" in the country, important public figures discovered in Swadeshi the real instrument providing ample scope to every citizen to have plenty and to develop his faculties—both mental and physical. An exhortation motivated with such progressive tendencies was rendered by Jitendra Lal Banerjee of Bengal in his speech delivered in the 1910 session of the Indian National Congress when he stated: "You must stick to Swadeshi and hold its glorious banner before you and flaunt it in the face of your enemy and under its broad and benignant shade march on to the far-shining goal of national salvation."⁷

Through such powerful utterances the leaders tried to bring home to the people that the spirit of Swadeshi and the use of energies in that direction could only protect the nation from racial arrogance and social humiliation. Through the utilization of this instrument could be eased the process of acquiring national independence and establishing self-government in India. The Bengali newspaper *Jugantar* stated, for example, that *firangee* rule based on injustice was an incalculable falsehood which should be rectified, and Swadeshi rule be established.⁸ To stimulate the forces of national reconstruction it quoted illustrations from the political and economic history of other countries imbibed by the same spirit. Pandit Rambhaji Datta Chaudhri, a veteran Congressman of those days, stipulated:

No acts of government, no passing of bills, no famine relief works can help us half as much as ourselves. We propose to have our own hearths and ovens, our own plates and dishes, our own caps and shoes, our own pens and knives, our own lights and matches. We want to use only what we can make. The Swadeshi movement...is a self-government of the people by the

7. *Report of 1910 Session*, pp. 48-9.

8. Cited by Valentine Chirol, *Indian Unrest* (London, 1910), pp. 16-7.

people where the (British) Government has no jurisdiction.⁹

The appeal of national regeneration was not confined to the elder generation. The forces of national reconstruction were fully aware of the dynamic power of the young intelligentsia pursuing their studies in schools and colleges, which if channelized and motivated for the national cause of Swadeshi, could render proper service to national advancement. On the slightest exhortation and provocation their abundant enthusiasm would lease itself to the cause. With this psychoanalytical background orators and speakers appealed to the younger intelligentsia not to aspire for higher administrative jobs in an enslaved country but to be the instruments of national reconstruction. They should be insured to hardship and boycott the use of foreign umbrellas and shoes. At home sandals only were to be used. They should educate themselves in a manner which would be befitting the retention of their independence. With the acquiring of the new outlook and economic skill their race was bound to improve rapidly. In a speech delivered at Rangpur National School in East Bengal on 19 January, 1907 Babu Bipin Chandra Pal called upon the young students:

Henceforth you should not aspire to being made Deputy Magistrates, Pleaders, or Clerks or to take up such occupations as will require you to sit in chairs or drive about in fine carriages. You must in future become carpenters, masons and blacksmiths and accustom yourselves to work for your bread by the sweat of your brow....When I was student I cherished the idea of independence. (Government) Service I considered slavery and decided on never giving up my independence.¹⁰

The Genesis of the Movement

As already pointed out, the immediate spark that led to the popularization of a nationwide Swadeshi Movement in

9. Pandit Rambhaji Datta Chaudhri, "The Swadeshi Movement", *The Indian Review* (Madras, 1907) Vol. VIII, pp. 436 & 438.
10. Home, Public-A, Progs. April 1907, Nos. 207-10, (Confdl), pp. 16-7. See also B.N. Agrawala, *Viplav yagya ki Aahutiyan* (Mirzapore, 1970), pp. 214-17.

1905 was the situation in Bengal, where issues of a local economic as well as of nationwide character were alike in operation. In order to swell the imperialist treasury and profits for British capitalism, Viceroy Curzon had initiated measures infringing on the interests not only of the people of the province, but even some of the zamindar groups loyal to the British. He had partitioned Bengal in two parts—East and West. The opposition of the people was no accident; it sprang from very real economic causes.

The division of Bengal infringed no less on the interests of the well-to-do bankers and moneylenders and they too rallied against the scheme. Official reports disclosed that there were some influential moneylenders with headquarters at Calcutta and with much of their moneylending business connections in the Dacca Division, who strongly opposed the scheme and were among the principal organizers of the agitation. They had spent their money freely in organizing the opposition; and they utilized all their influence with their constituents for the purpose.¹¹

It is worth noting that British businessmen in India raised no objections to the partition of Bengal.¹²

The Partition of Bengal seriously threatened the economic position of some Bengali intellectuals too, especially those connected with the legal profession. The Bengal National Chamber of Commerce issued a statement on 3 February 1904, asserting that the formation of a new province would curtail the activity of the Calcutta High Court and necessitate the establishment of a new Board of Revenue, with resultant harm to the interests of money lenders, landowners and some intellectuals. Calcutta's lawyers would accordingly find their sphere of activity restricted.¹³

On 10 July 1905 the British Government's decision on the Partition of Bengal and creation of a new province of "Eastern

11. *East India (Reconstruction of Bengal and Assam); Extra papers relating to the Reconstitution of the Provinces of Bengal and Assam* (London, 1905), p. 71

12. *Ibid*, p. 72.

13. *Ibid*, p. 48.

Bengal and Assam" with its capital at Dacca was made public in Simla. The hidden discontent that had been simmering against the plan for a long time now reached its climax. No sooner the announcement of the partition was made than energetic preparations to resist it began. The Bengali nationalists held a number of meetings which agreed on the convening of a public meeting at the Calcutta Town Hall on 7 August 1905.¹⁴

Several meetings and demonstrations against the partition scheme took place in Calcutta on 7 August 1905. A protest demonstration which rallied 15,000 people, the preponderant number of whom was that of students, marched down the streets of the city.¹⁵ Its Indian quarters were deserted, for the residents had all assembled around the Town Hall for the meeting. The people turned out in such an unprecedented number that three separate meetings had to be held instead of just one.¹⁶ All three unanimously decried the partition scheme and protested against its implementation. The meeting wholeheartedly supported the idea of boycotting British goods so long as the partition was not nullified.¹⁷ That was the beginning of the boycott. The text of the boycott decision read as follows:

This meeting fully sympathizes with the resolution adopted at many meetings held in the mofussil to abstain from the purchase of British manufactures so long as the Partition Resolution is not withdrawn, as a protest against the indifference of the British public and by the present Government in regard to Indian public opinion.¹⁸

Boycott was a distinct economic technique for the achievement of very substantial political results. It united Bengal in a common struggle against British Imperialism. The upsurge of the freedom movement of the Indian people

14. S. N. Banerjea, *A Nation in Making* (Oxford University Press), pp. 187 & 192.

15. *Times of India*, 12 August 1905, p. 5.

16. S. N. Banerjea, n. 14, pp. 209-10.

17. *Ibid.*

18. *Ibid.*, p. 192.

between 1905-8 started with the swadeshi acts in Bengal at the end of 1905. The subsequent years witnessed the Swadeshi Movement sweeping through the whole country, at certain places with greater intensity than in others until it became the first and most widespread form of mass action by the Indian people against imperialist subjugation. Thus the struggle took an economic turn. The boycott in Bengal was a concrete manifestation of the Swadeshi Movement in a particular part of the country which led to the spread of swadeshi throughout India as a specific form of the freedom struggle of the Indian people. The *Times of India* was perhaps correct in pointing out in April 1905:

The development of industries is a subject very much in the air in this country at the present day. Indian newspapers and magazines are full of it. It is often debated in political and literary societies. The movement though so far more or less of an academic character represents, we think, a genuine and growing conviction in the minds of the intelligent sections of the population that the true progress of the country depends on its economic progress.¹⁹

In the words of the same newspaper, a debate that had opened throughout the country about "a so-called Swadeshi movement which its supporters aver, will be the best thing for Indian industries".²⁰ But the developments in Bengal brought the debate to an end by turning the Swadeshi Movement into a concrete form of mass anti-colonial movement.

The Viceroy's Proclamation making the Partition of Bengal and formation of the new province effective on 16 October 1905 was issued on 1 September 1905. For days together afterwards many Bengali newspapers wore black in sign of mourning. Protesting against the partition, they urged the public to extend the scope of the boycott and popularize the consumption of locally manufactured articles and to stimulate the production of new goods by creating a demand for their consumption. In fact, a close scrutiny of the official report on the reaction of the native-owned

19. *Times of India*, 22 April 1905, p. 3.

20. *Ibid.*

contemporary newspapers and journals clearly indicates that there was no dearth of such protests. Even three years later on 30 January 1909, *Sanjivani* (Calcutta) wrote on Swadeshi:

We have come to realise at least that a mortal struggle has commenced between the rulers and the people.... The Swadeshi agitation is as invaluable to us as the vivifying nectar. After such a long time a remedy has been discovered for our chronic famine and poverty and therefore, all classes of people are planning Swadeshi in every house. We also find that wherever Swadeshi agitation has found a firm footing, British merchandise is disappearing for ever and to that extent a wall is being raised in every house against England.

Continuing, the journal called upon the people:

Swadeshi will have to be preached in every village among the cultivators, and British merchandise must be eliminated from the remote villages like poison. If the illiterate millions, who are slumbering behind the backs of the educated and who, if awakened would shout with a thunderous voice resembling the roar of a cataclysm as if the world were about to come to an end, could be once initiated in the *Swadeshi mantra* then an all round success would be gained.²¹

Such writings provided a great impetus to the growth of a number of new industries. Messers Andrew Yule & Co. and Messers Kettlewell Bullen & Co. decided to close their offices dealing in foreign goods. Messers Yule started a Swadeshi Wearing Company whose shares were sold in the bazaars at a premium. Similarly, Messers Kettlewell Bullen & Co. opened out a "Bharat Hiteshi Spinning and Weaving Company Limited". Their shares were also rapidly sold.²² The Calcutta Marwaris set up a Swadeshi Spinning and Weaving Mill with a capital of Rs. 400,000 divided into shares of Rs. 500, half

21. *Report of Native-owned newspapers in Bengal for the week ending February 1908*, (Government of India Publication), pp. 244-45.

22. *Home (Public) B, Progs*; October 1906, No. 13 (Confid), pp. 124.

of which were already distributed by the time the news of its establishment was made public.²³ Besides, Rabindranath Tagore also opened some swadeshi stores and steamship companies. In Barisal there came into existence the *Swadeshi Bandhab Samiti*. It organized 41 branches in the district for the propagation of swadeshi. It engaged two permanent preachers to carry the swadeshi gospel into the interior of the district. It also started a weaving school. It imported swadeshi cloth from Calcutta to sell it cheaply and its members took the goods about on their own shoulders to save coolie hire. Under its auspices nearly 1400 Swadeshi meetings had been held throughout Barisal. Due to its influence nearly 500 disputes were settled by arbitration and not less than 340 people working against the Swadeshi Movement were subjected to social punishment.²⁴ Appraising its contribution under the caption "What a Glorious Record" *The Bengalee*, dated 16 August 1906 wrote:

If wisdom is justified of her children, then verily the *Swadeshi* movement has been amply justified of its votaries. The "Swadeshi Bandhab Samiti" of Barisal has within a few years worked miracles. Truly an astonishingly creditable record of good work. Who is there amongst us who will not be proud to belong to such an organization? The Barisal

23. *Times of India*, 6 January 1906, p. 7.

But there were also certain members of the merchantile class who played an anti-national role during the Swadeshi Movement. *The Bengalee* dated 22 August 1906 reported a case filed in the Calcutta Police Court on 20 August where Babu Kali Charan Palit, Vakil applied for process against one Panna Lal for cheating the complainant firm by selling Manchester clothes as "Swadeshi" goods. The facts, as stated in the report of the Police Inspector were that the complainant had received information that the accused who dealt largely in clothes, was importing clothes from Manchester with the proper descriptive mark but after receiving them, he obliterated these marks by stamping on them with indigo and putting the name of "Swadeshi Mill". Later he was importing clothes without any stamp on them and under special instructions the clothes were stamped with a paper ticket, which used to be taken off and swadeshi stamp put on them. A larger quantity of such clothes, tickets and blocks for stamping were found with the respondent. [Home (Public)-B Progs; October 1906, No. 13 (confd), pp. 5-6.]

24. Home (Public)-B Progs; October 1906, No. 13 (confd), p. 8.

“Swadeshi Bandhab Samiti” has made every Bengalee proud of his nation.²⁵

A sufficient number of Indian industrialists revived many indigenous industries. The handlooms all over Bengal and Madras showed unwonted development. New industries also commenced to grow in all sides. “There was, indeed, a race all over the country, and especially in Bengal, for the manufacture of every possible article of popular consumption in the country”, writes B. C. Pal.²⁶ There took place a good development of the jute mills in Bengal. The exports of the jute goods was nearly doubled between 1903-04 and 1907-08, the figures for 1907-08 being Rs. 18,29,76,000 as against Rs. 9,46,92,000 for 1903-04. The production and exports of tea to foreign countries also increased, the value of the latter having advanced from Rs. 8½ crores in 1903-04 to more than 9½ crores in 1906-07 and Rs. 10½ crores in 1907-08.²⁷

Boycott in action

To materialize their plan of Swadeshism people in large number boycotted foreign goods. They recognized in the boycott not merely a political weapon to be utilized for evading the sale of the British manufactures by “pressing the pocket-nerve” — as it was popularly called by the alien businessmen—but a dynamic economic instrument. They saw in it the only way to safeguard themselves from the devastating economic exploitation of India by foreign, especially British capital. Consequently, they took a pledge in thousands to boycott foreign goods until the Partition of Bengal was withdrawn. Imbibed by this new spirit the businessmen either cancelled or did not sign their forward contracts. And the lucky days of the subsequent years went without any business in Manchester piecegoods. Calcutta warehouses full of foreign fabrics went unattended by customers. A number of the biggest European import houses had either to close down their piece-goods branches or to be satisfied with the very small business. Marwari cloth vendors and dealers were mobbed and persuaded to part with their dealings in foreign

25. Ibid.

26. Bipin Chandra Pal, *The Spirit of Indian Nationalism* (London), p. 66.

27. V. G. Kale, “Swadeshi and Boycott”, *The Indian Review* (Madras, 1909), Vol. X, p. 433.

cloth. Many prominent Marwari firms were practically ruined. The rich Marwari merchants whose warehouses were heavily stocked with foreign goods were obliged to sell British commodities at heavily reduced prices.²⁸ In the *Fortnightly Report* submitted by the Chief Secretary to the Government of Bengal to the Home Secretary to the Government of India, Home Department on 8 October 1906 it was admitted:

As regards trade, the collector of customs report that it has been slack...for the last four or five months....Mr. Moreshead remarks: "There have been attempts to prevent indenters placing orders to English goods and some storekeepers in the New Market have abstained for a time....There is a tendency, attributed to the leaflets about impurities in European sugar, towards the consumption of Indian refined sugar and other having resemblance to Indian refined, such as Java sugar, which ignorant consumers are unable to distinguish from Indian ... Stocks of piece-goods in Calcutta are still very heavy and I am told that the bulk of the goods imported in the last few months are still in Calcutta godowns undisposed of."²⁹

Contrary to the expectations of the colonialists the boycott continued unabated. Influenced by public opinion the traders were obliged to engage increasingly in the sale of Indian goods. Quoting its Calcutta correspondent, the *Englishman* said:

Many of the shops that used, previous to the Swadeshi movement coming in vogue, to have stock goods manufactured in the British Isles or on the continent as well as those of Indian make are now as far as practicable dealing only in goods manufactured in this country. Shop-keepers attribute the change to the fact that most of their native customers now insist on being supplied with goods manufactured in India and refuse in most cases to purchase any article

28. *Times of India*, 9 September 1906, p. 6.

29. Home (Public)-B, Proceedings, October 1906, No. 13 (confd), pp. 4-5.

not made in this country. According to impressions made on shop-keepers, the movement in favour of use of indigenous goods in preference to those from Europe seems among the illiterate classes of the native community to be regarded with religious fervour.³⁰

Textile manufacturers of Manchester were seriously alarmed when the sale of British fabrics failed to rise in Bengal during the religious holidays. At certain places people in large gatherings were persuaded to take a vow before the idols of Shiva and Kali not to use foreign goods. A note prepared by Mr. Moreshead, Collector of Customs in Calcutta in September 1906, regarding the effect of the Swadeshi Movement and boycott of British or foreign goods on the course of trade showed that it had a significant effect in increasing the consumption of Indian salt. The clearances had risen from 47,850 maunds in August, 1905, to 76,615 maunds in August, 1906. On the other hand, the consumption of British salt had fallen from 3,41,641 maunds in August, 1905 to 3,02,030 maunds in August, 1906. But use of foreign salt had fallen in a still larger ratio from 3,80,854 maunds in August, 1905 to 2,79,450 maunds in August, 1906.³¹

Outside the mofussil area very few orders for English boots and shoes were placed. However, the Bengalis who purchased

30. It will not be inappropriate to point out that the economic aspect of the freedom movement influenced the behaviour of the Indian bourgeoisie to degrees as varied as the development of that bourgeoisie was varied. In reality, Swadeshi brought to the surface the heterogenous character of Indian bourgeoisie all the more. The merchants, traders and middlemen or as they are more frequently called the *compradore bourgeoisie*, were more seriously affected by the discard of British goods. In a letter to the editor of appearing under pseudonym "Hindoo Merchant" in the *Times of India* the Bengalis were advised not to spread the boycott to other areas of India, because not plenty of cloth was being manufactured at home, and therefore prices would go up, and the only gainers would be the Bombay manufacturers, who were ruthless exploiters of the workers. According to the writer, the traders and middlemen were the worst losers: "The result of the present boycott so far has been a heavy loss to those native merchants interested in English manufactures." His advice to Bombay merchants was to stay away from the movement. [*Times of India*, 30 September 1905, p. 7.]

31. Home (Public)-B, Proceedings, October 1906, N. 13, (confidential), pp. 2-3.

English-made boots and shoes often went to the extent of erasing the English mark or name before taking the goods home saying that the people of the *Parah* would become annoyed and they would be put to shame if they were seen with English boots and shoes.³²

The Marwaris, especially dealers in English piecegoods, were very bitter against the Bengalis on account of their interference with trade. Besides, the conservative press in other parts of the country began to decry it. The *Jam-e-Jamshel* denounced the "extremity" of the boycott.³³ The *Indian Social Reformer* said it was "madness" and "asceticism" to boycott all foreign goods as in Bengal.³⁴

In Calcutta there had been instances when students opened the bundles of passers-by to see whether they contained English-made goods. At certain places like Jhalakati in Bakarganj volunteers stopped wedding parties and searched their boxes for "Belaiti" clothes.³⁵ No less glorious was the boycott of Burn & Co. by its Indian employees.³⁶

Eastern Bengal and Assam

Equally widespread and popular was the Swadeshi Movement in Eastern Bengal and Assam. In the *Fortnightly Report* dated 6 October 1906, submitted by the provincial authorities to the Government of India it was admitted:

The Swadeshi movement, which in its essence is of a nature to attract the sympathy of all persons, however loyal they may be to the present Government, has been ingeniously used as the rallying point of the agitation against Government. And it has for this reason been made the chief subject of discussion at all anti-British meetings....By means of the boycott the agitators have been able to invest this movement with the turbulence which is attractive to their followers, and they have succeeded to a great

32. Ibid.

33. *Times of India*, 9 September 1905, P. 10.

34. Ibid., 14 October 1905, p. 9.

35. Home (Public)- A, Progs., June 1907, Nos, 145-48. (Confdl),p. 13.

36. B.N. Agrawala, n. 10, P. 223.

extent in persuading many others that the action which Government has had to take to curb these excesses proves that the whole *Swadeshi* Movement is viewed by the official classes and all Englishmen with hostility.³⁷

Influenced by the political propaganda a number of swadeshi activities were organized. In January 1907, a Swadeshi Bazaar was started at Dacca and was held every Sunday. On the first occasion there were about 50 stalls and the articles exhibited for sale included country-made sticks, cricket bats and balls, Dacca-made clothes, mother-of-pearl buttons, Barisal nibs and stationery, Berhampore and Assam silks and sugar manufactured in Jessore district. About 1,000 people visited the bazaar and out of about Rs. 5,000 worth of articles on view, about Rs. 4,000 worth were sold. On Dasami Jatra Day (lucky day) none of the Indian traders ordered any *Belaiti* goods.³⁸

Besides, there was a considerable revival of interference with the trade and picketing of shops on the part of school and college boys. This was attributable, to a large measure, to the political tours made by Babu Bipin Chandra Pal, during which he delivered strongly anti-British speeches and encouraged his audience to continue the boycott inspite of all deterrents. Simultaneously, efforts were also made by the nationalist elements to encourage the people to boycott foreign salt and sugar on account of their impurity. The services of the *pundits* were procured to prohibit their utilization by the Hindus. At the same time it was also popularised that the cloth imported from foreign countries was not pure because tallow was used in the process of its manufacture.

In Sirajganj in Eastern Bengal a *Mahajan Samiti* was founded by shopkeepers who took a vow not to deal in foreign goods, to boycott shopkeepers dealing in foreign goods and to request the Zamindars to deprive these refractory shopkeepers of the services of barbers and washermen.*

37. Home (Public)- A Progs. December, 1906, No. 14 (Confdl), p. 13.

38. Home (Public)- A Progs. April 1907, Nos. 207-17 (confdl), p. 31.

* Ibid.

Wide publicity was given to an incident which took place in the village of Tarke, Bakerganj District, East Bengal. According to the *Englishman*, a prominent "swadeshi agitator" from the town of Barisal was conducting a meeting in the village when a steamship anchored at the wharf. The crew made ready to deposit its cargo of British goods on shore. But the villagers hurried to the spot and prevented the unloading, and the ship had to turn back with its cargo.³⁹

Suppression of the Movement

Towards the close of September 1905, the colonial authorities resorted to repressive measures against the boycotters. On 22 September the Calcutta Police Commissioner banned public meetings at the important public centres. The bureaucracy forcibly dispersed them off and on with lathi-charges on the demonstrators, the majority of whom were school boys. There appeared to be prevailing great "unrest" all over the country. Every beating of the processionists by the police was replied in strong rebuke and severe castigation. A few specimens of this popular indignation are illustrated here:

Why is "Swadeshi" a red rag to all John Bulls,
And why hunt schools boys for eschewing mulls?
We would fight that in fairness our claim were heard.
And greater freedom on India conferred....
We seethe with foam at each lash of the wind we feel;
Would you blame the wounded—not
those who use the steel.⁴⁰

Brutal repression took its heaviest toll at Barisal in East Bengal, where the Provincial Conference was disbanded on the strict orders of Lt.-Governor Fuller. When the local leaders and people protested, they were mercilessly batoned on their chests and backs. Many were killed on the spot, hundreds were severely injured. Among the many thousands arrested was also the veteran Congress leader, Surendera Nath Banerjea who was made to stand before the

39. *Times of India*, 11 November 1905, p. 1.

40. G. Annaji Rao, "Unrest", *The Indian Review* (Madras, 1908) Vol. IX, p. 521.

Magistrate like a culprit child for hours together. This kind of naked British rule repulsed even those Bengalees who had till now frankly admired the British culture and civilization. The *Tribune* (Lahore) dated 7 February 1906 ironically equated the repression of the Swadeshi workers by Gurkha troops in Barisal to giving them over to "the tender mercies of the Cossack".⁴¹

Inspiring the people not to be afraid of repression the nationalist forces compared it with the hammer that was moulding them into a mighty nation by its beating. Suppression was not to destroy but to recreate. Without suffering there could be no growth. Eulogizing the sufferers in the movement Shri Aurobindo proclaimed:

Theirs was the blood of *Raktabij* (seed of blood). For their action sprang from no passing or material interests but from something that was imperishable and perennial. It was something which the fire could not burn and the sword could not kill, the winds of repression could not wither and all the waters could not down.⁴²

Simultaneously Aurobindo did not spare the bureaucracy. Writing in *Bande Matram* he alleged that it had taken care to destroy every centre of strength not subservient to its whims. He charged that a nation "politically disorganized, morally corrupted, intellectually pauperised, physically broken and stunted" was the result of a hundred years of British rule, "the account which England can give before God of trust which he placed in her hands." He added that the condition of the people was the one answer to all the songs of praise which the bureaucrats sang of their rule, which the people of England chorus with such smug self-satisfaction and which even foreign people echoed "in the tune" of admiration and praise. Repudiating this hypocritic belief of the British Imperialists Aurobindo highlighted the naked truth when he said:

41. *The Selections from the Native Newspapers published in the Punjab upto 10 February 1906* (confdl.) vol. XIX, No. 6, p. 40. Also see B.N. Agrawala, n. 10, pp. 217-18.

42. Shri Aurobindo, *Speeches* (Calcutta, Arya Publishing House, 1945) p. 167.

But for us ...the song has no longer any charm, the *mantra* has lost its hypnotic force, the spell has ceased to work....We can deceive ourselves no longer. Pain is a terrible disillusioner and the pangs which had come upon us were those of approaching dissolution.⁴³

Aurobindo did not end his dialogue there. He also took up the cudgels against the bourgeois liberal elements led by Rabindranath Tagore who severely criticized the manner in which the boycott was being conducted, in an article headed "The Morality of Boycott" and probably written for *Bande Matram*. The article was found in his house during a search, and was filed as an exhibit in the Alipore Bomb Conspiracy case. Even Mr. Beachcroft who tried the case described the article in his judgment as an essay of much literary excellence. Referring to Tagore as "New Prophet of Nationalism in Bengal" as he was probably known and "as a poet of sweetness and love" who had perhaps done much to awaken Bengal, Aurobindo expressed his astonishment when the poet-philosopher had written deprecating the boycott as an act of hate. He held that the saintliness of spirit which Tagore would see brought into politics was the reflex of his own personality colouring the political ideals of a sattari race. He alleged that the temperament of the bourgeois liberals forbade them from being able to "feel the delight of battle" and they looked on what they would not understand as something monstrous and sinful. "Heal hate by love", "drive injustice by justice", "slay sin by righteousness" was the cry. Aurobindo agreed that love was a sacred name, but he also addressed a reality when he said, "It is easier to speak of love than to love". He carried his argument to a universally recognized logical sequence when he added that the love which drove out hate was a divine quality of which only one man in a thousand was capable. A saint full of love for all mankind possessed it, a philanthropist consumed with a desire to heal the miseries of the race possessed it. But was it not a fact that the mass of mankind did not and could not rise to this utopian height. He said that politics was concerned with the masses of mankind and not with individuals. To

43. *Selections from the Bande Matram* (Benaras, Swaraj Publishing House, 1922), pp. 17-8.

ask, therefore, the masses to act as saints, to rise to the height of divine, love and practise it in relation to their adversaries or oppressors was to ignore human nature. "It is to set a premium", he continued, "on injustice and violence by paralysing the hand of the deliverer when raised to strike off his name. The *Gita* is the best answer to those who shrink from battle as a sin and aggression as a lowering of morality". Upholding the practice of boycott as valid Aurobindo added:

...in reality the boycott is not an act of hate. It is an act of self-defence, of aggression for the sake of self-preservation. To call it an act of hate is to say that a man who is being slowly murdered is not qualified in striking out his murderer. To say that man must desist from using the first effective weapon that comes to his hand, because the blow would be an act of hate is precisely on a par with this deprecation of boycott.

Referring to his religion Aurobindo stipulated that Hinduism recognized human nature and made no impossible prerequisite. It set one ideal for the saint, another for the man of action, a third for the trader, a fourth for the serf. To prescribe the same ideal, therefore, for all was to introduce *Vernashankra* (impotency). And was it not an admitted truth that confusion of duties ruined society and race? "If we are content to be serfs", he remarked, "then indeed boycott is a sin for us not because it is a violation of love but because it is a violation of sudra's duty of obedience and contentment". He added that politics was the ideal of the *Kshatriya* (martial race) and the *Kshatriyas* ought to govern Indians in their political actions. To impose in politics the Brahmanical (priestly) duty of saintly suffering was to preach *Vernashankra*. It does not, however, imply that Aurobindo called for the discard of love. On the contrary, he upheld and recognized that love had a place in politics, but it was

the love of one's country, for one's country, for the glory, greatness and happiness of the race, the divine *ananda* of self-immolation for one's fellows, ecstasy of relieving their sufferings, the joy of seeing one's blood flow for country and freedom, the bliss of

union in death with the fathers of the race. The feeling of almost physical delight in the touch of the mothersoil, of the winds that blow from Indian seas, of the rivers that stream from Indian children...is the physical root of that love. The pride in our past, the pain of our present, the passion for the future are its trunks and branches, self-sacrifice and self-forgetfulness, great surmise, high endurance for the country are its fruit, And the sap which keeps it alive is the realization of the Motherland of God in the country, and vision of the mother, the knowledge of the mother, the perpetual contemplation, adoration and service of the mother.

He, therefore, categorically remarked:

Other love than this is foreign to the motives of political action. Between nation and nation there is justice, partiality, chivalry, duty but not love....Love of one race for another is a thing foreign to the nature. When therefore the boycott as declared by the Indian race against the British is stigmatised for want of love, the charge is bad psychology as well as bad morality. It is interest militating against interest and hatred is directed not really against the race but against the adverse interest. If the British exploitation were to cease tomorrow the hatred against the British race would disappear in a moment....Not hatred against foreigners but antipathy to the evils of foreign exploitation is the true root of boycott.

Admitting the partial truth stipulated by the bourgeois liberals that hatred was demoralizing, Aurobindo took the dialogue further by remarking that it was also stimulating. He believed that the web of life had been made a mingled strain of good and evil. The bourgeois liberals, therefore, should not deprecate a necessary and great movement just because in the inevitable course of human nature it had engendered feelings of hostility and hatred. If hatred grew it was essential that it should grow as a stimulus, as a means of awakening. Concluding his logic Aurobindo remarked firmly:

When तमस (tamas) inertia torper have benumbed a nation the strongest forms of रजस (rajas) are necessary to wreak the spell; there is no form of रजस as strong as hatred. Through रजस we rise to सतम् (satam) and for the Indian temperament the transition does not take long. Already the element of hatred is gaining place to the clear conception of love for the mother as the spring of our political actions.

As a corrolary to his concluding remarks he replied in a very firm tone to those who deprecated the application of violence in the furtherance of boycott. The use of violence was in his view purely a matter of policy and expediency and might be inexpedient for a race circumstanced like Indians. But the moral question did not arise. He, therefore, firmly added:

The morality of the *kshatriya* justified violence in times of war, and boycott is a war. No body blames the Americans for throwing British tea into Boston harbour, nor can any body blame similar action in India....The sword of the warrior is as necessary to the fulfilment of justice and righteousness as the holiness of the saint. Ramdas is not complete without Shivaji. To maintain justice and prevent the strong from despoiling and the weak from being oppressed is the function for which the *Kshatriya* was created. Therefore says Shreekrishna in the Mahabharata, God created battle and armour, the sword, the blow and the dagger.⁴⁴

Such writings provided a great impetus to the Swadeshi and Boycott Movement, and generated strong anti-British feelings. With all their powerful paraphernalia of army and administration the colonialists appeared to be in a very difficult situation to subdue the rising insurrection, tempo and energy of the people. Boycott thus turned out to be an unconscious act of freedom which had brought struggle in its wake calling upon the people to shake off their accustomed indolence and apathy. The sense of irreparable weakness

44. Ibid, pp. 175-81.

began to be substituted by a growing feeling of strength. The people of Bengal began to think that their future need not be a hopeless blank unless they chose to make it so. Signs of life made themselves visible in most places. In the new environment of hopes and aspirations the sceptic had to soften his voice of despair and disillusion. Words of regeneration began to make themselves heard. Truth broke through the restraints of ignorance and weakness began to press its claim for recognition. People in Bengal saw, as it were with a suddenly enlarged vision, the broad principles of national economic regeneration and felt an imperative call for acting up to it.

Movement becomes nation-wide

The organizers of the movement against the Partition of Bengal appealed to their countrymen all over India to join the forces of the national movement.⁴⁵ The response was so spontaneous and so wide that Swadeshi spread throughout the length and breadth of the land, because the reasons that had led to the rise of the movement were valid for the whole of India. Meetings, demonstrations and all sorts of rallies became common features of Swadeshi.

Maharashtra

A stirring campaign for Swadeshi was organized in Maharashtra. Tilak toured all over the region and explained in the meetings of students and workers the genesis of Swadeshi. He exhorted them to buy home-made goods and boycott foreign goods and called upon to raise the demand of *Swaraj*, not to sit silently but to declare boldly that the prevailing socio-political set-up was deplorable as it did not suit the interests of the Indian people. "The boycott", said Tilak in his letter to the editor of the *Times of India*, "was a complement of Swadeshi."⁴⁶ The press in Maharashtra, particularly newspapers like *Maharatta* and *Kesari* came out thoroughly in support of the movement. Tilak himself wrote a series of vigorous and thoughtful articles in the *Kesari* on boycott as economic and political *yoga*. To those who opposed him he

45: *Times of India*, 9 September 1905, p. 6.

46, *Ibid*, 23 June 1906.

replied that as in *yoga*, so in the boycott “even a little of this *dharna* saves us from a mighty peril”. And the mighty peril was the entire starvation of the country by foreign exploiters and its complete and hopeless dependence on foreigners for almost all articles of common use, he added.⁴⁷

New organizations sprang up in Maharashtra for the express purpose of spreading the ideas of Swadeshi. Public organizations already in existence formed special committees to the same end.⁴⁸ Even theatrical workers joined in the movement. A theatrical conference held in Maharashtra addressed an appeal to theatre troupes to purchase only Indian goods for their stage needs.⁴⁹

In Bombay were established the swadeshi cooperative stores with the active co-operation of Tilak and the financial support of Sir Ratan Tata, Sir Manmohandas Ramji, and other Gujarati, Bhatia and Marwari industrial magnates. Tilak gave a great impetus to the *Paisa Fund*,⁵⁰ a movement started in Bombay by A.D. Kali. Its funds were utilized for conducting research in the Indian glass industry and promoting technical studies by Indian students abroad. Monetary aid was also given to village weavers, and small cottage industries in rural areas.

In Maharashtra, like Bengal, two national holidays were made occasions for the dissemination of Swadeshi ideas. During the Shivaji Festival at Poona in honour of the founder of the Maratha State—a festival started at the initiative of Tilak in 1899—an exhibition of Swadeshi goods was held.⁵¹ Similar exhibitions were arranged at the festival in honour of Ganesh, God of Wisdom and Success. At the opening ceremony the speakers stressed India's economic backwardness and the significance of assisting the nation to overcome it.

47. Cited in Haridas Mukherjee & Uma Mukherjee, *Sri Aurobindo and The New Thought* (Calcutta, 1964), p. 44.

48. Ram Gopal, *Lokamanya Tilak, A Biography* (1956), p. 231.

49. *Ibid.*

50. D. V. Tahmankar, *Lokamanya Tilak* (London, 1956), p. 135.

51. There were 50 tents on the fair grounds displaying everything from swadeshi caps, soap manufactured in Poona, cloth notepaper and ink, medicines, leather bags and purses made in Sholapur to brass-work, handlooms etc. [*Times of India*, 9 June 1906, p. 5. For further study see also Agrawala, n. 10, pp. 34-41].

In February 1909 the Swadeshi Weaving Company was set up in Poona for the production of high quality cloth. The capital of the Company at the initial stage was Rs. 250,000. It released 1,000 shares of Rs. 250/-each, with 400 of the shares already realised.⁵²

Like other students of other places, in Poona, V. D. Savarkar and his young group became the promoters of Swadeshi. His stirring eloquence was a great attraction to the people of Poona in those years. He and his young colleagues resolved to practise the boycott of foreign goods. He exhorted the other students to make a bonfire of foreign clothes. On the advice of prominent leaders like Tilak and H. C. Kelkar, they collected a heap of foreign clothes and took them in procession along the Reay Market and burnt them in the open field across the Lakdi Pool, in Poona. Glowing and stirring speeches were delivered before the burning heap. The burning "flames whirled up in the sky and the noise echoed through the length and breadth of India. Hatred of British domination was rising and Savarkar added fuel to the fire of hatred"⁵³ by his speeches. For taking this leading part in the bonfire and delivering "farcy" speeches Savarkar was fined Rs. 10/- and expelled from the college residency.

His expulsion produced great indignation in Maharashtra. Almost all nationalist-minded papers condemned this step of the college authorities. A large number of people sent donations to Savarkar who paid the fine and donated the rest of the amount to the *Paisa Fund*.

The agitation for swadeshi and boycott did not remain confined to Bengal and Maharashtra. Its spirit was imbibed by people residing over a large part of the country. Gradually it became an all-India movement. Valentine Chirol, a contemporary correspondent of the London *Times* in India during those hectic days reported home:

The agitation increased in volume and in intensity. Nationalism in Maharashtra and Bengal had

52. *Times of India*, 24 February 1906, p. 5.

53. Dhnanjay Keer, *Savarkar and His Times* (Bombay, 1950), p. 20.

meant hitherto little more than Maharatta and Bengalee-nationalism, each flowing in a separate stream. They were now both merged in a larger stream which spread over a greater part of India, and Indian nationalism was fed by racial passion with vision of India as the protagonist, more formidable even than Japan, of all the coloured peoples of Asia in revolt against the white man's supremacy. Had not the voice of *Kali* been heard to clamour for the blood of "white goats" and was it not clearly the blood of the white oppressors of India for which the Black Mother was athirst.⁵⁴

The Punjab and Northern India

In the northern provinces the Swadeshi and Boycott programme was organized under the leadership of Lala Lajpat Rai, Pandit Madan Mohan Malaviya and others. These public leaders delivered speeches, organized processions and popularized the manufacturing of swadeshi goods.

In an article contributed to the *Indian Review* in 1907 Lala Lajpat Rai stated that Swadeshi ought to teach them to organize their capital and labour and, energies and talents to the greatest good of all Indians irrespective of creed, colour or caste. He regarded it as the salvation of the country. He also contended: "It ought to unite us with an altar before which we can stand in the fullest sincerity of our hearts and in the deepest strength of faith to pray for the good of our common motherland, and with a determination to stand together and work together. In my opinion the *Swadeshi* ought to be the common religion of United India."⁵⁵

54. Valentine Chirol, *India* (London, Ernest Benn Ltd, 1926), p. 120.

55. Lajpat Rai, "The Swadeshi Movement", *The Indian Review* (Madras, 1907) Vol. VIII, p. 335. It may be recalled that the movement against the use of foreign sugar bore a distinctly religious colour. That was only in the natural order of things. India was still a country of very strong feudal survivals, and the hold of religion over the mind of the people was tremendous. At this particular juncture of the liberation struggle, it was quite natural for Swadeshi, as an integral part of the movement, to sometimes assume a religious character.

In another article Lala Lajpat Rai ridiculed the views of a group that consisted of the "honourable gentlemen" who believed in the fairness of the "British nation" as represented by its electorate, and feared that the boycott would displease the British voters to whom they turned for protection from the colonial bureaucracy. He pointed out that Indian's rising industrial vigour was bound to effect the profits of that "well educated beast"⁵⁶, the English businessman. Swadeshi and boycott were complementary, he stressed. The British electorate had obstructed various needed reforms in India on more than one occasion. It would not help matters to discontinue the boycott. On the contrary, the British electorate--"a nation of shopkeepers"⁵⁷—could only respond to what affected their business interests.⁵⁸

In the Punjab there was great enthusiasm for the movement. Processions of "babus", the representatives of the educated community, schoolboys, the trading artisans and rich agriculturist classes, from the last two of which most of the recruits were drawn, were organized. The famous Punjabi poet T. C. Gujarati, a resident of Gujarat district, recited some verses of his own composition on Swadeshi in a meeting. In one of the lines the name of Surendra Nath Banerjea occurred. "Suddenly the whole vast assemblage", reported the *Tribune* dated 8 May 1906, "seemed to be electrified. With one voice all shouted: *Surendra Babu Ki Jai*....The cheers evoked by Surendra Nath's name were not merely a personal homage to the Bengali leader. The ovation was in honour of the spirit of labouring and suffering in the country's cause, a spirit of which Surendra Nath was held to be an embodiment."

Punjabi soldiers who could read the Punjabi papers did not remain unaffected by the spirit. Through the journals and their countrymen they learnt all that was going on in the country. "They cannot be prevented from imbibing", wrote *The Tribune* on 8 May 1906, "the sentiments prevailing in all classes of the community, excepting

56. *Swadeshi Movement—a symposium* (Madras), p. 70.

57. *Ibid.*

58. *Ibid.*

the lowest and most ignorant.”⁵⁹ So we see that not only Bengal, but the Punjab as well, like other parts of India, and not only the civil population, but to a certain extent the military as well, were saturated with the spirit which the alien authorities had set themselves to suppress.

The people also participated in the boycott of foreign goods. Four teachers of the Lyallpur Government High School on the permanent staff were dismissed on the charge that they had privately preached the Swadeshi doctrine to their pupils with the result that the latter refused to accept sweets made of foreign sugar at the prize distribution of the school. “These four men get the unusual honour”, wrote the *Punjabee* dated 2 June 1906, “of first martyrs to the Swadeshi cause in the Punjab.”⁶⁰ The students gave up the use of foreign sugar. They asked the school caterers (*halwais*) not to use *Bideshi* sugar in their preparations if they cared to retain their customers. Gradually the wave of indignation against the use of foreign sugar⁶¹ swept the Punjab. The *Paisa Akhbar* dated 5 September, 1906 published a communication in which the writer alleged that, according to the *New York World*, the proprietors of sugar factories in America were in the habit of buying the dead bodies of workmen and other poor people and using the flesh in refining the sugar manufactured by them. It did not matter whether the bodies were of persons who had died from contagious diseases, nay, even those of lepers were not rejected. Sputum and other secretions, which workmen collected in vessels and sold to their employers, were also used for the same purpose. After stating how it was well known that imported sugar was also refined with the bones and blood of cows, swines etc., the correspondent

59. *The Selections from the Native Newspapers published in the Punjab received upto 12 May 1906 (Confdl)* Vol. XIX, No. 19, pp. 114-15.

60. *Ibid.*

61. It may recalled that the dumping of foreign sugar, some of it European, at the turn of the century had seriously undermined domestic sugar-making, with deleterious effects on agriculture. The area planted to sugarcane shrank from 2,700,000 acres in 1900 to 2,200,000 acres in 1905, while imports of refined sugar increased from 146,800 tons to 323,200 tons. [*Times of India*, 24 March 1906, p. 9.]

exhorted both Hindus and Muhammedans to have nothing to do with foreign made sugar.⁶²

In November 1906 a leaflet stating that bone meal was one of the elements used in preparing foreign sugar was widely circulated in Sialkot. It hurt the religious feelings of faith-abiders and stirred up considerable indignation among the Hindus and Muslims.⁶³ Similar leaflets were subsequently circulated in other towns of the Punjab. On 20 November the merchants, who sold that product met in Rawalpindi, one of the chief markets for the sale of imported sugar, so that its sale could be stopped. The merchant's brotherhood decided not to use foreign sugar and to expel any members who violated that decision.⁶⁴

The importance of giving up the use of imported sugar was vigorously stressed at swadeshi meetings held in December 1906.⁶⁵ At Lahore those meetings attracted huge crowds. A great many Brahmans of Multan congregated in their temple and unanimously proscribed the use of foreign sugar on the basis of the religious principles of Hinduism. The Brahmans pledged to refrain from using foreign sugar, and set the size of the fines to be imposed on violators. The following morning the whole town was apprised of the ban on offerings of sweets containing foreign sugar to Brahmans.⁶⁶

According to the observation of the *Paisa Akhbar* (Lahore) dated 28 June 1906 there was a big agitation against beet-sugar. In large cities the associations had been established to discourage the use of this quality of sugar; those at Amritsar, Delhi, Mathura, Benaras had achieved considerable success. In not a few places penalties were inflicted on confectioners using the article in question which was considered "unclean" and had been well-nigh banished from feasts. "If the struggle", observed the editor, "continues and the people remain firm, the import of beet-sugar to India will be greatly

62. *Selections from the Native Newspapers published in the Punjab received upto 15 September 1906* (Confdl) Vol. XIX, No. 37, p. 233.

63. *Times of India*, 18 November 1905, p. 1.

64. *Ibid*, 25 November 1905, p. 7.

65. *Ibid*, 9 December 1905, p. 10.

66. *Ibid*.

reduced.” In the end the editor exhorted his fellow countrymen to have nothing to do with imported sugar.⁶⁷

There was also a vigorous agitation against the use of imported sugar in Hardwar, a religious centre in Northern India.

At a special meeting in Kangra all confectioners and shopkeepers signed an agreement which bound them to refrain from the use of foreign sugar. At the same time, reported the *Times of India*, an appeal went out to all Muslims in Delhi to have nothing to do with that form of the Swadeshi movement. But in Jammu (in the Kashmir State), the agitation against the use of foreign sugar reached its climax in December 1905. Several meetings held there passed resolutions banning its use. Their decision was brought to the notice of the confectioners, and the latter's stocks of imported sugar were purchased from them with money contributed by the public.⁶⁸

However, the agitation did not remain confined to the boycott of foreign commodities only. Substantial progress was also made in the manufacturing of Swadeshi goods. The classes invested their financial resources in the establishment of new factories and industries. A Swadeshi Company was established in Sialkot; its capital of Rs. 50,000 was divided into shares of Rs. 10/-each with a view to placing them within the reach of all.⁶⁹ At Sialkot Swadeshi trunks were manufactured. But the Traffic Superintendent of North-Western Railway banned their transmission by the Railway services.⁷⁰ At Dera Ismail Khan a Swadeshi Stores Company was started with a capital of Rs. 50,000. Its shares were sold at Rs.20/-each.⁷¹ The Swadeshi spirit also manifested in the establishment of new banks and insurance companies. The principle of co-operative credit came to be grasped and the societies established for this purpose were declared to be making fair progress.

67. *Selections from the Native Newspapers published in the Punjab received upto 12 May 1906* (Confdl) Vol. XIX, No. 27, p. 174.

68. *Times of India*, 30 December 1905, p.7.

69. *Ibid*, 18 November 1905, p. 1.

70. *The Selections from the Native Newspapers published in the Punjab received upto 12 May 1906* (Confdl) Vol. XIX, No. 19, pp. 114-15.

71. *Times of India*, 23 December 1905, p. 10.

In the United Provinces a considerable amount of economic work was done by the Imperial Institute at Dehra Dun and a variety of woods were being experimented with for the manufacture of lead pencils, match boxes, tea boxes, opium chests, tobacco pipes. Two sugar factories in Cawnpore had started regular operations. The rich classes at Allahabad proposed to erect a large refinery in that town. A company was formed to work the old Stewart Tannery at Agra. New weaving schools, besides a glass factory, were also established in the United Provinces.⁷²

Much the same situation prevailed in other parts of the United Provinces. One has the testimony of J. K. Hardie to the effect that

Benares is famous for the silks and brass work. The more common and useful kinds of silks received some impetus from the Swadeshi movement...Swadeshi is also helping the brass workers, and German goods are not so much in vogue as formerly.⁷³

Late in December 1905, an Indian exhibition opened in Benaras. Its moving spirit, as in the case of all such exhibitions, was the Indian National Congress. Speaking at the opening ceremony, the Maharajah of Benaras said the Exhibition was proof of the determination of the "educated middle class" to clean itself of the reproach that it "paid excessive attention to political agitation, and had no adequate conception of industrial development as a factor in national regeneration."⁷⁴ The account of the Exhibition which appeared in the *Times of India*, said: "Everywhere on the Exhibition ground the word of Swadeshi meets the eye: 'Swadeshi' trunks, 'Swadeshi' boots".⁷⁵ The products of a number of large Bombay firms were displayed, but the main emphasis was on handweaving.

72. V. G. Kale "Swadeshi and Boycott", *The Indian Review* (Madras, 1909), Vol. X, p. 434.

73. J. K. Hardie, *India, Impressions and Suggestions* (London, 1917), p. 52.

74. *Times of India*, 30 December 1905, p. 9.

75. *Ibid*, p. 8.

Madras

In Madras Presidency the prominent political leaders, especially militants like the renowned poet Bharati, were taking keen interest in the Swadeshi Movement. Besides, a large number of journals and periodicals were propagating the cause through their impressive and powerful writings. The most prominent journal among all of them appeared to be the *Indian Review* (Monthly). In its columns it organized symposia in connection with the movement and invited prominent political writers to contribute their views. As a result of these activities Swadeshi became popular. A number of dyeing and weaving industries were established in Madras. Quite a large number of families of weavers which had been out of work for a long time, and were struggling against their economic backwardness, had once more a hopeful prospect.

On 10 September, 1905 a Swadeshi meeting was held in Madras attended by about a thousand students from various colleges. The students enthusiastically cheered the aims of the movement. The chairman called for unity for the sake of its success. Subramania Iyer moved that a store be established for the exhibition and sale of articles of indigenous industry and also that a bureau of industrial information be opened. A second resolution exhorted all well-wishers of the country to use their utmost efforts in encouraging the exclusive use of indigenous articles.⁷⁶

The movement for buying home goods became very popular. The British journalist H.W. Nevinson found, for example, that the Swadeshi goods movement was very strong in Madras. "None but Swadeshi goods", "Buy our Nationalist cotton", "Try our *Bande Matram* cigarettes" were the most telling advertisements a shop could write up or insert in the local newspapers, which were particularly strong and excellent in Madras.⁷⁷

The collection of money for the so-called National Fund was highly instrumental in popularising the ideas of *swadeshism* in Tamilnadu. According to Subramania Iyer,

76. Ibid, 16 September 1905, p. 5.

77. H.W. Nevinson, *New Spirit in India* (London, 1906), p. 123.

who visited many cities and villages in Southern India, the collection was taken up in the most remote settlements, and everywhere the people grasped the importance and full scope of the movement with a readiness and intelligence, hitherto unexpected by our public men living in large centres of educated thought.”⁷⁸ The ordinary people considered it a good and patriotic cause.

Bombay

In Bombay N.H. Setalwad claimed that long before the Bangali people took up the inspiring activities of swadeshi and boycott, the movement was already progressing unnoticed in the western zone with varying force. People were shunning all Manchester-made goods. Explaining the genesis of the movement Setalwad stated in 1908, “When an Indian resolves to patronise swadeshi goods, he is doing only what others have done in past in other lands.”⁷⁹

At this very time, Gujarati capitalists and businessmen of the Jain faith assembled in great numbers to adopt a decision that the domestic demand for commodities should be satisfied with Indian goods.

When the Moderate leaders shied clear of any initiative in that respect, it was Tilak and his followers who got swadeshi agitation off the ground in Bombay, until then lagging much behind the rest of Maharashtra. Tilak presided over the first Swadeshi meeting in Bombay.⁸⁰

The Swadeshi Movement stimulated interest in indigenous products. An Industrial and Agricultural Exhibition was held towards the end of 1905 in Bombay under the auspices of the National Congress, with the prominent Indian businessman, V.D. Thackersey, as its manager.⁸¹ According

78. From an article in the December 1906 *Wednesday Review*, reprinted in *Swadeshi Movement*, n. 56, p. 129.

79. N.H. Setalwad, “Swadeshism and its aspects”, *The Indian Review* (Madras, 1908), Vol. VIII, p. 101.

80. Ram Gopal, n. 48, p. 234.

81. *Times of India*, 21 October 1905, p. 3.

to *Gujarat Mitra*, the Exhibition was a unique and great success.⁸²

Another organization, distinct from those in Bengal, the Bombay Swadeshi Trades Association, arranged frequent bazaars in various parts of the city which popularized the Indian textiles. While foreign goods were not boycotted, the bazaars gave good publicity to hand-woven fabrics and displayed new types of looms for hand weavers.⁸³

. Besides, two swadeshi banks with a capital of Rs. 3 crores were opened in Bombay city. Two new swadeshi steamship companies with a capital of about Rs. 1 crore were started. The number of the joint stock companies increased. But the most noteworthy development was in the textile industry. The Indian cotton Mills that upto now had done very little business owing to the competition of Manchester had new life instilled into them.⁸⁴ Appraising the contribution of the Bombay mercantile class to the Swadeshi Movement by developing textiles Professor V.G. Kale wrote:

What a genuine swadeshi spirit can do is well illustrated by the textile industry of Bombay....The production of cotton manufacture, both yarns and piece goods, has nearly doubled within the last five years and exports of the same which stood at 14½ crores of rupees in 1905-6 declined to 12 crores in the next year and to 10¾ crores in 1907-8. This means larger quantities were absorbed in the country. Bombay Mills were able to clothe the sister provinces with their produce and the lakhs of yards of cloth that have been sent to Bengal and Madras speak the triumph of Swadeshi in Bombay. The Industrial movement has long taken root in the presidency.⁸⁵

82. Ibid, 4 November 1905, p. 11.

83. Ibid, 12 May 1906, p. 9.

84. Bipin Chandra Pal, *The Spirit of Indian Nationalism*, n. 26, p. 66.

85. V.G. Kale, "Swadeshi and Boycott" *The Indian Review* (Madras, 1909), vol. X, p. 432. While reviewing the progress of the textile industry in the period of 1895-1914 it cannot be denied that the first half of this period was full of troubles for the industry. There were the two severe famines upto 1900, plague in Bombay in 1896, the great American speculation in raw cotton (whose price

Another eye-witness corroborated in his account with this industrial resurgence and progress. "Such was the movement", recorded Nevinson, "which I found speeding up....The eighty or ninety cotton mills in Bombay however much work as they might do, they could not keep pace with the demand from Bengal."⁸⁶

Industrialization

Taking the picture of India as a whole and with the growth of new political consciousness the indigenous industrialist class established new industries, despite the negative attitude of the alien regime. In the cotton mill industry, for instance, while in 1877 there were only 51 mills with 12,44,206 spindles and 10,385 looms, in 1900 the number of mills was 193, spindles 49,45,783 and looms 40,124. The number of workers employed in the industry was 1,61,189.⁸⁷ By 1913-14 the total strength of the mills increased to 264, workers employed 260,847, number of looms 96,688 and number of spindles 6,620,576.⁸⁸

In Bombay Presidency alone there were about 67 per cent of the total mills out of which 46 per cent were located in Bombay city itself.⁸⁹

In the jute mill industry, the average number of mills for quinquennial periods following 1879-80, 1899-1900, 1909-10, and 1913-14 were 21, 36, 60 and 64 respectively.⁹⁰ Taking the

shot up) and finally depression in China, India's chief yarn market at that time. Thus the industry suffered a depression during those years and yet it did experience some growth; the number of both mills and workers increased. But the progress was more rapid in the later phase. The trend towards finer quality was continued and, as in the previous period, first spinning grew faster and then weaving. Indian's market for these piecegoods was in the African and Asian nations and the cloth exports amounted to 9 to 15 per cent of the output. [T.B. Desai, *Economic History of India* (Bombay, Vora & Co., 1968), p. 98.]

86. Nevinson, n. 77, p. 85.

87. *Indian Year Book*, 1929 (Bombay, The Times Press), p. 724.

88. D. R. Gadgil, *The Industrial Evolution of India in Recent Times* (Oxford University Press, 1946, seventh ed.), p. 107.

89. T.B. Desai, *Economic History of India 1857-1947* (Bombay, Vora & Co., 1968), p. 95.

90. D. R. Gadgil, n. 88, p. 110.

period from 1895 to 1914 while looms in the industry increased from 10,169 to 36,050 in the same period the number of spindles increased from 214, 679 to 744,289 and that of workers employed from 78,114 to 216,288.⁹¹ The jute industry was most efficient and was a contrast to the position in the cotton mills. The industry was highly localized, the centre being Calcutta. The mills were far bigger. Almost all of them had both spinning and weaving and the machinery was up-to-date. One could see that both sides of the river Ganges, up and down Calcutta were studded with flourishing mills and busy centres of industrial activity. For nearly twenty miles of the Hooghly, one would find tall chimneys proclaiming the invasion of a new spirit and life in an area where once upon a time no man probably stirred out of his home in quest of industrial pursuits. It is not an exaggeration to say that there was an unprecedented hum of industrial life. More than half the share in the jute industry was owned by Indians, although the management was European.⁹² The other favourable factors were Indians' monopoly in raw jute and its nearness to the mills, absence of a cheaper, efficient substitute, low taxation and plenty of cheap labour.

91. Desai, n. 89, pp. 95 and 110. It is to be remembered that the beginning of industrial resurgence was made with industries producing consumption goods, cotton and jute. The reasons for this choice were obvious. They did not involve complicated processes, special skills or huge amounts of capital; the markets already existed within the country and the period of waiting was not long.
92. Unfortunately in subsequent years the British bourgeoisie, through its clever manipulation, succeeded in acquiring an over-all control of the jute industry. Lamenting over this *Volte face* in his speech as chairman of the Reception Committee for the Indian Industrial Conference held at Calcutta in December 1917, the Maharaja of Kasimbazar had pointed out that the Indian industrialists had a very little share in the premier industry of the province. Excepting the cultivation of jute, he added, all the subsequent stages of its distribution and manufacture had practically 'passed out of Bengalee hands. The Bengalee peasant no doubt cultivated and produced jute, but the Bengalee trader or industrialist had ceased to have any large interest in its sale or manufacture. He concluded in a woeful tone : "It is a great pity and great reflection upon our business capacity that nothing is being done by the pioneers of industry in this part of the country to establish any decent jute-mills and run them in their own responsibility." [*Report of the Thirteenth Indian Industrial Conference held at Calcutta on 30 and 31 December 1917*, p. 15].

A beginning in the development of heavy industry was made by the establishment of the iron and steel industry. One of the remarkable attempts in this direction was made by the Bengal Iron Company. The history of the foundation of this company is indeed a romance. It was practically the result of the keenness and foresight of one man, Jamshedji N. Tata. But there were earlier pioneers: the first successful enterprise was at Barakar, which started making pig iron in 1875. It was taken over by the Bengal Iron Company in 1889 and made steel at a profit after 20 year's labour. In 1907 it produced 50,000 tons of pig iron and in the next ten years the works were remodelled and extended. It made good progress between 1914 and 1930. The pig iron industry did not suffer much in the post-war depression, as India's pig iron was the cheapest, and the company's capacity increased to 2 lakhs tons of pig iron. But the real beginning of the industry was made at Jamshedpur in Bihar by Tata. The company was floated in 1907 with Indian capital. The first iron was made in 1911 and the first steel in 1913. Then came the War, which was very favourable to the industry's growth. Imports of steel was difficult, so Indian companies tried to maximize output. By 1916-17 the old Tata plant was in full production, which was 1.5 lakhs tons each of pig iron and steel ingots and one lakh tons of finished steel. The heavy war demand also led to further extension: the third blast furnace was installed in 1919, the fourth in 1922 and new mills for increasing steel production in 1924.⁹³

Such expansion and consolidation of the higher trends of bourgeois enterprise was an index to the development of Indian capitalism. It is, however, to be remembered that the development of capitalism in India, when studied from the territorial standpoint, was very uneven, as could be seen in the way the joint-stock companies were located in various regions of the country. Most of them were concentrated in Bengal (40.5 per cent) and Bombay Presidency (37.7 per cent) with Madras Presidency emerging third (8.5 per cent).⁹⁴ Certainly the above statistics related exclusively to the higher forms of bourgeois enterprise, which are obviously not the

93. T.B. Desai, n. 89, pp. 104-05.

94. *Moral and Material Progress and Condition for the year 1906-07* (London, 1908), p. 44.

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only forms capitalist development takes. Nonetheless, they bear out the decidedly varying extent and maturity of capitalist development in various parts of the country. Such circumstances exerted a great impact on the growth of the freedom movement. While the development of capitalism throughout the country built up the general economic basis of the mass all-India anti-imperialist struggle, the unevenness of that development was one of the main reasons for the differences observed in the intensity of the liberation movement in various parts of the country.

- The joint-stock companies registered in India were grouped according to different branches of economy as follows (in millions of pounds of paid-up capital):⁹⁵

| | |
|-----------------------|------|
| Banking and Insurance | 3.0 |
| Trading and Shipping | 5.7 |
| Mining and Quarrying | 2.0 |
| Mills and Presses | 13.6 |
| Tea and Planting | 2.4 |
| Other industries | 1.3 |

These companies were established with the help of capital procured mostly from inside the country. Inference should, however, not be drawn from this that they were all owned by Indian businessmen. At least half of the firms were controlled by British bourgeoisie. The latter owned practically all the tea and mining companies. The same was true for the great majority of insurance, shipping and banking companies of these years. About half of the joint-stock capital of the manufacturing companies, however, came from local capitalists. Most of these local concerns were concentrated in Bombay Presidency.

In 1908, there came a great slump in exports to China. To face the new situation the President of the Bombay Millowners Association drew the attention of the annual conference of that body to the point that it was important to look "more and more to the home market for the expansion of our industry and less to foreign markets."⁹⁶

95. Ibid. .

96. *Times of India*, 11 April 1908, p. 9.

A special feature of the struggle for India's domestic market and the distinctive development of the Indian textile industry was the encouragement of handicraft production alongside manufacture, and of the manufacturers' interest in seeing the handicrafts develop.⁹⁷

In consequence of the loss of the Far Eastern markets, the problem of finding a market for their own yarn inside India became increasingly acute. Under these circumstances it was but natural that the big bourgeoisie supported the development of small-scale hand-weaving that enabled it to sell more yarn at home. V. Thackersey, a leading Indian manufacturer and spokesman of the big national bourgeoisie, stated:

The question of immediate revival of the handloom weaving industry on a commercial basis demands the most earnest attention of every well-wisher of India.⁹⁸

The reason why the big bourgeoisie of the country attached great significance to hand-weaving was but obvious. Such stress mirrored its desire to expand production. In other words, the growth of the domestic textile industry which was the main sphere of broad Indian enterprise, strikingly reflected certain peculiarities of the development of Indian capitalism, one being the prolonged co-existence and interconnection of a number of branches of small-scale and large-scale production (without, of course, eliminating the conflict between them).

Handloom weaving was the main Indian handicraft. It provided a living to millions of people. According to V. Thackersey there were 2,700,000 cotton handloom weavers besides dependents numbering 2,800,000.⁹⁹ Other sources put

97. The interest is explained by the following figures: In 1905 Indian manufacturers produced 580 million English pounds of yarn, of which 235 million or 40 per cent was exported, 125 million or 23 per cent woven into cloth at the same factories, and 190 million or 27 per cent used in hand weaving, while 10 per cent went for the production of rope and so on. [*Times of India*, 3 February 1906, p. 15.]

98. Ibid, 3 February 1906, p. 15.

99. Ibid.

the number at 3,300,000 weavers, or together with their dependents at a total of 10,000,000.¹⁰⁰ This section of the Indian economy was second only to the agriculture in the numbers of people it provided with a livelihood. So simple a form of commodity production could only be carried on by ample cheap labour. One reflection of the specific development of capitalism in India is thus the complex inter-relation of hand-weaving and textile mill production (the two main branches of the native small-scale and large-scale industries) or, to put the matter in a nutshell, in their prolonged association and mutual interest in each other's development. The millowners were keenly interested in the development of indigenous hand-weaving because the latter promoted their profits by boosting the local market for yarn. The small weavers were able, due to the growth of the local mills, to purchase better quality and cheaper factory yarn for their fabrics, which gave their product a higher competitive value on the market.

To be sure, relations between small-scale and large-scale production were far from being hostile. The main rival of the native factory product remained British imports, textile included. The vital interest of the cotton mills and hand weavers in each other's production created an additional economic basis in those days for limited anti-imperialist action on the part of the exceedingly numerous small producers and the national bourgeoisie.

Apart from the small hand weavers, there were also producers of local varieties of sugar, leather dressers, pottery makers, shoe-makers carpenters, blacksmiths, metal workers, and representatives of hundreds of other trades. Tens of millions of Indians were engaged in many branches of the small craft industries. The economic conditions of this section of Indian society, long subjected as it had been to ruthless suppression by British bourgeoisie, were sometimes even worse than those of the peasantry. The misery of the handicraftsmen often reached depths that compelled vast numbers to give up their accustomed trades. In a public enquiry conducted on the eve of World War I, was stated:

100. *The Indian Cotton Textile Industry* (Bombay, 1950), p. 122.

...competition with imported articles and the products of factories organised on the latest methods and worked by machinery has ruined many of the handicrafts...and compelled people to leave their ancestral vocations for other means of livelihood notably agriculture.¹⁰¹

No wonder then that the handicraftsmen proved one of the most vital instruments in the freedom movement against colonial oppression. Meanwhile some of the small handicraft producers had already begun to flock to the towns, where they increasingly became victim of trading and money lending capital and were drawn into capitalist production by the latter. The following description of the organisation of the lower forms of capitalist enterprise in Delhi in 1906 by Lala B. Nath, a prominent Indian public figure, is quite revealing:

In Delhi the tin industry has of late developed so enormously that large quantities of lamps, boxes and hurricane lanterns of all descriptions were made and exported. The artisans work with their old crude tools after old methods and yet their wares do not compare unfavourably with many an important one. They are employed by traders who advance them money and deduct it from the work done.¹⁰²

Nath's remark about assisting those skilled craftsmen to earn not five or ten, but thirty rupees a month is a self-evident testimony to the semi-starvation level on which they survived. The famous weavers of Benaras earned one to four annas a day, or from two to eight rupees a month.¹⁰³ The extremely low earnings of the handicraftsmen, in which the absence of other vocations and growing pressure of relative over-population played their part, constituted one of the principal reasons for the persistence of small-scale production in the face of the competition of mill products.

In some parts of the country the process of transformation of a section of the merchants and money-lenders into

101. K.L. Datta, *Report on the Enquiry into the Rise of Prices in India* (Calcutta, 1914), vol. I, p. 154.

102. *Swadeshi Movement*, n. 56, p. 94.

103. J.K. Hardie, n. 73, p. 52.

capitalists culminated in the establishment of special organizations naturally furthering their class interests. In 1905, a Millowners Association, representative of over two hundred factories in the Punjab, was formed.

There was a good deal of progress in other forms of small-scale industries too. The rice mills spread all over India, particularly in Bengal and Madras; and flour and oil mills also grew in number. Among the subsidiary industries, there was an increase in engineering and railway workshops and in iron foundries. The factors responsible for this increase were extension of railways and use of cycles, motor-cars and tramways, and of workshop motors and water pumps.

As a result of the heavy as well as small-scale industrialization there sprang up new cities with all the elementary elements of modernization. Worth noting is the fact that the development of commodity and monetary relations heightened the role of the cities and towns as important trading centres. The trading bourgeoisie constituted a numerous and significant section of the urban population.

In these new cities there developed a new culture introducing the indigenous world to the new democratic social life of the West. Out of this development there emerged all the modern socio-political and cultural movements playing the progressive role of attempting to transform India into a homogenous country free from caste and communal distinctions.

The new political and social groups emerging in the cities were quick to realize the significance of industrialization. Though they put forward distinctive theories and concepts regarding the social growth and resources—whether adopting the *laissez faire* dictum of private capitalist economy and unobstructed individual competition or a planned basis of nationalization—all of them cast their view in favour of speedy all-round expansion of industries. Despite innumerable differences among themselves, they made a united front for the cause of industrialization. They launched common campaigns and struggles against the policy of the alien

regime on industrial growth. Thus the demand for industrialization became a demand of the entire nation.

Further, wherever new industries were established labour was imported from other provinces to run them. For instance, labourers were invited from Uttar Pradesh and Bihar to run newly growing industries in Calcutta. Similarly, labourers were imported from many regions of Southern India to run industries in Bombay, Ahmedabad and Sholapur. The intermingling of these people from various parts of India fostered a new spirit of nationalism in them. They came in contact with the people belonging to various distinctive cultures and regions. The clash of their common interests with those of industrialists led to the growth of a new spirit in them, eliminating regional and linguistic differences and making a single unified force to some extent. On the other hand, the necessity of speedy industrialization and the clash of interests with the proletariat at various centres of industries, forged common bonds of unity and co-operation among the various industrialists in whatever part of the country they might be owning their industries.

The fundamental ingredient of the capitalist economy is competition and progressive development of industrial production. But those intermediate classes like artisans and others, being not financially powerful enough to compete with rich industrial competitors in the market, were impoverished financially and progressively joined the ranks of the proletariat. On the rural side also, the intermediate class of the peasant proprietor, as a result of its rapid ruin in the prevailing economic environment, rapidly lost its fields to merchants and money-lenders and a significant number of them became landless labourers and joined the industrial proletariat.

In the absence of the pre-requisites for their sustenance the labourers were bound to clash with the industrial class. In this conflict between two powerful classes, the British regime generally sided with the industrialists, and this in turn led to the growth of political consciousness among the proletariat. They became aware that such treatment was meted out to their class on an all-India level. Inevitably, they

concluded that, *first*, unless they organized themselves on an all-India basis, and, *secondly*, unless alien domination was eliminated, they would always be the losers in the conflict developing between them and the industrialists. It, therefore, became essential for them to support and enter into alliance with all those progressive forces which were fighting for national liberation and those moderate national elements which were greatly pressing for constitutional reforms. These developments made the proletariat the staunch supporter of nationalism and national independence which was only a stepping stone to the establishment of socialism. A reflection of their feelings and sentiments can be witnessed in the street demonstrations and general strikes of the Bombay workers organized on the occasion of Tilak's imprisonment in 1908.

On the other hand, due to a number of factors explained earlier the industrialists and businessmen also became upholders of nationalism.

Investment of foreign capital

At this juncture there also arose another question, i.e., what should be the attitude adopted towards the investment of foreign capital in order to make an accelerated growth of Indian capitalism and the development of the swadeshi movement? The variety of views that were in vogue in regard to this ticklish question and which sometimes, if not often, resulted in an interesting dialogue between divergent sections of the Indian capitalists and other strata of Indian society are quite revealing.

Ramesh Chander Dutt, who was elected to preside over Industrial Conference in 1905 and in whom the Indian industrial movement found one of its ablest and most zealous champions, was of the opinion that the investment of foreign capital in industries was undoubtedly useful. He elaborated the aim of swadeshi as, by every legal method, to encourage and foster home industries, whether financed and directed by Indian or by English bourgeoisie.¹⁰⁴ We need not say that the statement was applauded by the British Press.¹⁰⁵ It will

104. *Times of India*, 13 January 1909, p. 4.

105. *Ibid.*

not be out of context to point out here that Dutt had also stated that he looked upon the British bourgeoisie who owned the woolen mills at Cawnpore and the jute mills at Calcutta as among the "true benefactors of the Indian people."¹⁰⁶

There was the other side of the dispute too. On 6 August 1906 an article was published in the militant newspaper *Bande Matram*. The author of the article vehemently criticized the people who were buying shares in the joint-stock companies controlled by British bourgeoisie. He also defined the aims of swadeshi in an altogether different fashion. He said that it was essential not only to guarantee employment to Indian workers but also to create favourable conditions for the use of Indian capital. Not every commodity produced at home could be considered genuinely swadeshi, added the writer. Unlike Remesh Chander Dutt, who equated foreign and domestic capital, the *Bande Matram* drew a definite distinction between them. It is significant to point out that the newspaper rejected the idea of subordinate partnership of indigenous capital with foreign capital. The aim of the movement like other militant nationalists, the paper declared, was the absolutely independent capitalist development of India.¹⁰⁷

Actually *Bande Matram* preached the gospel of self-help and self-reliance. It stood for swadeshi in all things. It advocated the rallying, into one great force, of all those who desired to build a new India with indigenous resources and to agitate against all sorts of foreign, including economic, interference in the task of national reconstruction. Commenting on 8 September, 1908 on the investment of foreign capital it wrote:

Borrowed wealth and grandeur only crushes by its disagreeable weight. The simple bequeathal of our mother alone furnishes us with the necessary and essential outfit of life. We require the food and clothing to which she has accustomed us. We can live that life to which she has given the start. To follow her

106. *Report of Native-owned Newspapers published from Bengal for the week ending 6 September 1906*, No. 32, (confd), p. 2.

107. *Ibid.*

direction is to live well and live to a purpose. To do otherwise is to arrest our growth and die. The Romans were great so long as Rome was the Rome of the Camilli, the Cincinnti, the Fabil, the elder Sciopos, so long as her dictators came from the honest labour of the plough share, and her consuls from the hard self-denial of the farm. But when the drags of every foreign inequity poured their noisome stream into the Tiber then began her decline and fall. Let us, therefore, go back to our mother.¹⁰⁸

B. C. Pal, the leader of the Bengal Extremists and a regular contributor to the *Bande Matram*, voiced almost the same feeling:

We would not allow British capital to be engaged in the development of Indian resources, as British capital is now engaged. We would not grant it to British capitalists to dig up the mineral wealth of the land and carry it to their own isles. We would refuse admission to Englishmen within these territories if they want to continue to exploit our immense natural wealth for their own exclusive benefit....They would not be permitted to develop the natural resources of our country and convert us into a race of coolies. They would not be permitted to set up an Agricultural Institute at Pusa in Bihar with a view to the exploitation of the agricultural resources of that province.¹⁰⁹

Pal exhorted the Indian bourgeoisie and people to follow the example of America, Japan and Russia where the necessary capital was being procured in the "open market" guaranteeing the credit of the government.¹¹⁰

Such ideas were received with sympathy by the general public. On certain occasions the struggle against foreign capital assumed rather naive forms. In Delhi, late in 1908,

108. *Selection from the Bande Matram*, n. 43, pp. 61-2.

109. B.C. Pal, *Swadeshi and Swaraj: The Rise of new Patriotism* (Calcutta, 1954), p. 164.

110. *Ibid.*

Hindus and Muslims assembled to discuss the boycott of street cars owned by British capital which was exploiting India.¹¹¹

When Indian nationalists were thus engaged in a dialogue over the use of foreign capital, Lord Curzon intervened. He displayed little patience with those who were perpetually “talking copy-book fallacies about the economic drain”, and said in one of his speeches delivered on the occasion of his departure from India:

When I hear the employment of British capital in India deplored, I feel tempted to ask where, without it, would have been Calcutta? Where would have been Bombay? Where would have been our railways, our shipping, our river navigation, our immense and prosperous trade? And, why should a different argument be applied to India from any other country in the world? When great Britain poured her wealth into South America and China, I have never heard those countries complain that they were being ruined. No one pities Egypt when a foreign nation resuscitates her industries and dams the Nile. It was foreign capital and foreign brains that exploited the industries of Russia which are now beginning to be a source of such profit to that country. When America floods England, as she is doing, with the resources of her accumulated capital, her amazing inventiveness, and her commercial genius, none of us at home sits down and bewails our cruel lot at being bled by a foreign drain. I, therefore, would say to the people of this country—if any words would have the slightest effect—look facts in the face. Recognise that capital does not wrap itself in the flag of any one country. It is international. It is also like the wind which bloweth where it listeth, then comes and goes as it will. The whole industrial and mercantile world is one great field for the tiller to till; and if the man who lives on the spot will not cultivate it with his own spade, then he has no right

111. *Times of India*, 5 september 1908, p. 16.

to blame the outsider who enters it with his plough.¹¹²

Quick was the retort from B.C. Pal. He thought it needless to expose the obvious fallacy of Lord Curzon's plea. "Capital, in our time, is no doubt, 'international,'" he admitted, "and the whole industrial and mercantile world is one great field for the tiller to till", but it could not pursue its own object without regard to the supreme economic, industrial and even political interests of the different peoples among whom history had parcelled out this "great field". He alleged that the British capital could not work in South America or Russia or even in China, in the same way as it had and was doing in India. If Lord Curzon's theory of the international character of capital be correct, one might ask, why should not German capital be admitted, at least it might be invited, into Great Britain or the British Dominions, or into India, upon the same terms and with the same measure of freedom, as British capital was employed or admitted? He added that however might have this "poser" been replied before the War, the declared policy of the Britian was to prevent the exploitation of any part of the British Empire, in any shape or form, by German capital or German enterprise, and the Imperial Cabinet had been devising quite a variety of means to protect the economic and industrial interests of the Empire, both severally and collectively, against damaging competition from Germany and other "enemy" countries.¹¹³

The news was received with great shock in the business circles, British and Indian, in South India when the largest and oldest British firm in Madras, Arbuthnot and Co. declared itself bankrupt in October 1906. The firm had been in business since 1800, and its interests embraced practically all spheres of the economic life of the South, but above all, trade, coffee and other plantations, banking and industry. According to a rough estimate its Indian deposits were

112. Cited by Bipin Chandra Pal, *The New Economic menace to India* (Madras, Ganesh & Co., 1920), pp. 81-3. Sir Thomas Raleigh, ed. by, *Lord Curzon in India* (London, Macmillan & Co., 1906), pp. 279-80.

113. *Ibid*, pp. 83-4.

valued at Rs. 20 millions.¹¹⁴ The bankruptcy of Arbuthnot and Co. which the Indians had been accustomed to regard as permanent as the British Government, struck the Indian bourgeois circles with consternation.

This economic instability affected the 24 other foreign firms too. For instance, it greatly undermined the position of another big British firm in Madras—Binny and Co.¹¹⁵

The bankruptcy of the largest British company in India again drew attention towards the vital question of the attitude to foreign capital. The *Indian Patriot* drew much the same conclusion from it as had been voiced by the *Bande Matram*. In its opinion, the bankruptcy was to be taken as a warning to Indian investors not to put their money into British firms, but to set up their own banks.¹¹⁶

There were, however, other papers who were opposed to such an approach. The newspaper *Kaiser-i-Hind*, for instance, opposed the warnings given to the propertied classes of India, after the failure of Arbuthnot and Co., not to put their money into British firms. It stated:

In matters of banking and capital there cannot be distinction of race or creed. We admit that a country prospers more which had purely indigenous capital. But if the condition of the country forbids all expansion of the growth of commerce and industries without foreign capital, you have necessarily to depend on foreign capital. Swadeshi cry is good, but at the same time we have to look at it from all points of view. Can it be averred that under existing circumstances you can do altogether without foreign banking.¹¹⁷

The newspaper's reply to the problem posed was *No*, although it conceded that the country's wealth was being

114. *Times of India*, 27 October 1906, p. 4.

115. *Ibid*, 3 November 1906, p. 2.

116. *Ibid*, 27 October 1906, p. 2&4.

117. *Ibid*, 17 September 1906, p. 12.

drained off to Britain. Nevertheless, the paper was emphatic in pointing out that Indian bourgeoisie too were profiting from the investment of foreign capital. Addressing those in Madras who did not share its opinion, it stated:

Is it not the case that your sugar merchants, your traders in raw cotton, in seeds, in metals, in opium, in English piecegoods and dozen of other staple products, both toe imports and exports, derive benefit and grow rich by the use of foreign capital?¹¹⁸

Here, the *Kaiser-i-Hind* was articulating the views of the Indian capitalists, chiefly the merchants and middlemen engaged in wholesale trade, importing foreign goods and exporting home goods, a class which had close economic ties with British capital. The newspaper emphasized the bond between all kinds of capital, irrespective of the nationality of its possessors.

On the other hand, R.N. Mudholkar, General Secretary of the Indian Industrial Conference urged the immediate consideration of the steps to be taken for raising the indigenous capital for the creation of new industries and the improvement and development of old ones. In a circular issued in January 1906 to the provincial committees he drew attention towards the fact that there were important industries, like the mining, in which Indian capitalists had hardly ventured to put forth any efforts, but which had asumed or were asuming an importance that made it incumbent upon them to take serious counsel and to devise ways and means to obtain a due share for their people in these valuable industries. He warned that foreign companies, possessing all the requisites, had already controlled the field, and if they did not stir themselves in time, they might see the mining industry of the country passing into the hands of foreign capitalists. He added that the amount of capital required for that purpose would have to be very large; and this could be raised only if a united effort was made by the leading bourgeoisie of all the provinces. He suggested the formation of a central association to attract the help of the monied

classes, and the co-operation, according to their means, of the petty-bourgeois classes. Such an association, he added, would further have the benefit of possessing an influence which would facilitate the grant of concessions by Government, and it would enjoy a credit which would enable it to obtain loans on easy terms either in India or from abroad whenever any occasion arose for the same. In conclusion, Mudholkar begged the provincial committees to discuss the matter with the leading bourgeoisie in their respective provinces and discover whether the suggestion met with their approbation and support.¹¹⁹

Representatives of the big Indian capitalists, much of whose capital was invested in manufacturing, subscribed to views different from those subscribed by the *Bande Matram* and the *Indian Patriot*. It is self-evident from the utterances of V. Thackersey, prominent Bombay industrialist and President of the Second National Industrial Conference. The Conference was especially well attended—some 4000 delegates assembled there—and it was inaugurated by the Gaekwar of Baroda.

Thackersey began his lengthy address by paying compliments to the British authorities. He said there was a broad field for co-operation between British and Indian capital. Turning to the much debated question of “Indian capital versus foreign capital” Thackersey stated:

The great mistake to be guarded against is that because certain capital used in India is foreign it therefore must do harm to the country.¹²⁰

Simultaneously he warned that the price of investing foreign capital must not be too high and that all the profits accruing from it must not leave India. Japan was a good example, he stated, of the controlled use of foreign capital. But Japan was an independent country in contrast to India where British capital was encouraged.

119. “The Indian Industrial Conference”, *Indian Review* (Madras, 1906), vol. VII, p. 148

120. *Times of India*, 5 January 1907, p. 8.

Thackersey spoke in favour of the controlled inflow of foreign capital, but he realised that only the state could exercise such control, whereas in India the state protected the interests of British capital. He, therefore, chalked out a programme for businesslike co-operation with foreign capital, stipulating that the share of profit accruing to Indian capitalists should be increased. Contrary to *Bande Matram*, he frankly called for the investment of capital in non-Indian firms.

• Above all, he stressed that joint-stock companies should be established to attract foreign capital. But he also vehemently criticized the practice of not admitting Indian capitalists into foreign firms, primarily he favoured the investment of foreign capital as an important source of stimulating the business activity of the indigenous capitalists.¹²¹

The question of investment of foreign capital continued to be a lively controversy throughout the period of British occupation. Towards the close of the period under study Bipin Chandra Pal again drew the attention of the Indian public towards the issue in an article entitled "Foreign Capital and National Autonomy". Although he did not refuse to admit that under the peculiar conditions of India foreign capital was badly wanted for the development of national resources and the evolution of economic life along modern lines, according to him what the Indian economists and politicians contended was that they should have been encouraged and helped for advance along their own national lines, consistently with the preservation of their special social and economic structure and character of their special culture and civilization. He alleged that the processes of economic exploitation started by the nation which had acquired political authority over them, however, ignored the past of their subjects, denied their claims to any high civilization or social evolution, and sought to force upon them their own ideals and impose upon their ancient moulds the heavy framework of an alien economic and industrial society. Diagnosing the consequences of such a practice Bipin Chandra Pal remarked:

121. Ibid.

...herein lay the grave evils of the so-called economic "development" which has been worked in India with the help of British capitalists and adventurers. And the greatest tragedy of it all is that the Government of India has never had any appreciation of these fatal consequences. And the result has been that the process of this fatal foreign exploitation thoughtlessly encouraged in the earlier years of our British connection has gradually developed into a conscious aim and has become now a part of the settled and organised policy of British Imperialism.¹²²

To remove the apprehensions of the European commercial community in India, engendered due to the introduction of the Montford Reforms the Viceroy, Lord Chelmsford, took pains in his opening speech delivered at the winter session of the Imperial Legislative Council at Delhi on 6 February 1919:

I have not found, by the way, in papers of a year ago, or the criticism just received, any reasoned statement of the ways in which it is supposed that the British trade-interest may be jeopardised by the changes which we have in view (in provincial legislation)....In any case, there is the safeguard of the triple veto of the Governor, the Governor-General and the Crown, and this applies to all provincial legislation. It seems to me indeed, that the control of the matters of peculiar interest to European commerce is, to a great extent, concentrated in the hands of the Government of India.¹²³

Banks

The big Indian traders of the period began to attach great importance to banks as a profitable source for investment of capital. They, therefore, established close links for that purpose with the princes and landlords who were depositing their money in the banks and sometimes giving outright support to the establishment of new banks. On 19

122. Bipin Chandra Pal, n. 112, pp. 101-3.

123. Cited by B.C. Pal, *Ibid*, pp. 96-98.

July 1908, in the princely state of Baroda a big meeting devoted to the foundation of the Bank of Baroda was held. The ceremony was attended by the biggest feudal lords of Bombay and Ahmedabad, led by V. Thackersey. The State Government gave the new bank considerable financial aid: Rs. 750,000 in deposits at 4 per cent and Rs. 250,000 without interest; Rs. 10,000 annually for expenses etc.¹²⁴ In his inaugural address the Gaekwar of Baroda drew attention to the successful establishment of two Swadeshi banks in Bombay. He said that joint-stock banks were a component of "industrialism".¹²⁵ The Indian capitalists who were closely linked with British capital were eager to set up their own independent business. In 1907, a group of prominent Bengali capitalists, among them D.N. Mookerjee, a partner in the big English firm of Martin and Co., established the Swadeshi Bengal National Bank.¹²⁶ The leaders of the freedom movement also attributed great importance to the establishment of Indian banks. Tilak delivered a number of speeches in Bengal towards the close of 1906 in which he exhorted Indian traders to establish their own banks and devote their attention on production.¹²⁷

It may be recalled that there were three indigenous large banks, known as the Presidency Banks in India. These were in Bengal, Madras and Bombay. Their combined capital at the end of 1904-05 was 3.60 crores with a reserve fund amounting to Rs. 2.50 crore of rupees.¹²⁸

The other indigenous banks, with their head offices located in India, were: Allahabad Bank, Bank of Upper India, Alliance Bank of Simla, Oudh Commercial Bank, Commercial Bank of India, Deccan Bank, Punjab National Bank, Bank of Calcutta and People's Bank.

The total capital of these banks amounted to Rs. 78.92 lakhs at the end of 1904-05, with a reserve of Rs. 62.69

124. *Times of India*, 25 July 1908, p. 7.

125. *Ibid.*

126. *Ibid.*, 5 October 1907, p. 5.

127. *Ibid.*, 13 October 1906, p. 11.

128. Mercantilist, "Banking in India", *Indian Review* (Madras, 1906), vol. VII, p.889. For further study see *Moral and Material Progress and conditions in India during year 1907-08*, p p. 12-13.

lakhs.¹²⁹ On 31 December 1906, their aggregate capital was Rs.109.99 lakhs.¹³⁰ By 1913, banks with a paid-up capital and reserve of over Rs. 5 lakhs increased from 9 to 18, showing a paid-up capital and reserve of Rs. 4 crores and total deposits of Rs. 27 crores.¹³¹ The number of smaller banks founded during this period was even greater.

In 1913 there occurred the terrible banking crisis which swept away and liquidated a large number of banks including the People's Bank which was founded in 1901. The liquidation of the People's Bank was greatly aggrieved by the people. The sole aim of this bank was to promote and maintain the industrial enterprises on Swadeshi lines.

The victims of the banking crisis of 1913-17 numbered 87. The total paid-up capital of over Rs. 13 crores, so lost, was more than half of the total paid-up capital of all the joint stock banks that survived the ordeal.¹³²

129. Ibid, p. 889.

130. *Moral and Material Progress and Conditions*, n. 128, p. 13.

131. *Indian Banking Analysed*; a directory of banking in India, Pakistan, Burma & Ceylon (Delhi, the Banking Experts, 1953), p. 19.

132. Ibid, pp. 19-20.

ECONOMIC NATIONALISM

C—Transport and Communications System

Modern means of transport were a formidable force in unifying the Indian People socially. The locomotive, triumphantly traversing a big physical distance, also helped to annihilate the social distance dividing the people living in different parts.

[A.R. Desai, *Social Background of Indian Nationalism* (Bombay, Popular Book Depot, 1954), p. 113.]

As already stated, the British Government in India developed the modern system of transport and communications. Though the construction work in this sphere was motivated by considerations of the rights and privileges extending to the foreigners, it played a very significant role in the history of the Indian people. It helped to modernize their way of life.

Railways

Though work on the railway projects was started in the middle of the nineteenth century, it made rapid progress only in the twentieth century.¹ Between 1900 and 1914 nearly 10,000 miles of rail was laid. By 1913-14 the total mileage of railways open for traffic in India was 34,656.² By 1920 the figures had

1. Vera Anstey, *The Economic Development of India* (London, Longmans, 1939), p. 133.
2. D.R. Gadgil, *The Industrial Evolution of India in Recent Times* (Oxford University Press, Seventh ed.), p. 132.

reached up to 37,029 miles³ with a capital investment of 566.38 crores of rupees.⁴

Railway construction was started with the undertaking of large trunk lines covering the length and breadth of the country. These trunk lines connected south with central and north India and east with west India. In 1909 was completed the Nagda-Mathura line uniting Bombay and Delhi through Eastern Rajputana. In addition, the Kalka-Simla line was constructed in 1903; the Quetta-Nushki line in 1905, the the Dhanbad and Manpar line (completing the "East Indian Railway Grand Chord", i.e., the direct route between Benaras and Calcutta) in 1907; and the Southern Indian Railway was extended to Dhanushkodi, on the island of Rameshwaram in 1908.

The construction of railways revolutionized the economic life of India. It assisted in establishing plantation and large scale factories on an economic basis. It developed trade on a national level. It tended to undermine village isolation and to bring into existence an integrated national economy. The steam engine, it has been said, has played a more important part in the history of the world than all the battles ever fought.

Above all, the railways became an integral part of overall economic development which proved an invaluable economic asset.

Besides, they reinforced the growth of dynamic social ideals. Gradually a desire for the development of new contacts and institutions with the object of reorganising the indigenous social organism on a national plane began to sway the minds of the people. These new feelings tended to break up the existing social order governed by caste, creed, regional and sex distinctions. The mobilization of the people on an unprecedented scale, which was made possible as a result of the speedy travel on the railways, culminated in the development of increased contacts between individuals and masses;

3. *Ibid*, p. 321.

4. S.K. Srivastava, *Transport Development in India* (Ghaziabad, Deepak Publishing House, 1953), p. 21.

classes and castes; regions and localities; and ideas and ideals. It also led to the dissolution of the old orthodox habits regarding food, physical and other contacts and helped the growth of an intense intellectual life in the great cities. With the development of railways more and more people began to go on pilgrimages, which in its turn led to the development of social contacts between the people coming from the remote areas in India. Thus gradually a feeling of nationality began to take shape in the minds of the people.

The railways also brought about an economic revolution, a transition in India. The laying down of the railroads led in turn to an increase in the transportation of freight by the wagonload rather than on the backs of beasts of burden. The volume of railway freight grew much faster than the length of the railway lines. By the year 1890 and 1905 annual travelling of passengers by rail increased from 114 to 248 millions and the volume of railway freight from 23 to 55 million tons.⁵ This does not, however, mean that the traffic in freight was conducted primarily in the interest of India. In fact, the railway routes were not meant to develop internal trade⁶ or industry by joining trade points or building feeder lines. They were basically intended to facilitate foreign trade, particularly agrarian exports, because the routes from the ports passed through important agricultural districts. Moreover, the rates of railway freight were favourable for the despatch of raw materials to the ports. All this left its mark and hampered industrial growth later. The policy had an adverse effect particularly on the coal industry and on other industrial centres in the interior. It is true that the railways assisted the growth of industries like coal and cotton. But the routes and

5. K.L. Datta, *Report on the Enquiry into the Rise of Prices in India* (Calcutta, 1914), Vol. I, p. 23.

6. An Indian should not, however, hesitate to admit that for the first time there developed on an unprecedented scale the internal trade in cheap, bulky and heavy goods, and also in perishable goods like fruits, vegetables and milk. The result was that Indian markets became wider and better organized. Techniques of trade were revolutionized. Uniformity of price was achieved and India became one market. This increase in trade created new towns and enlarged old ones; but railways also diverted some trade routes and thus isolating several old towns like Mirzapur, Saugar which, therefore, decayed.

rates were so devised that Indian industries could not take full advantage of this new transport. Further, the steamship made possible the import of cheap machine made goods from the West; and railways distributed them throughout the country, with the assistance of road markets and fairs. But this crippled Indian handicrafts and broke down the self-sufficiency of the villages. There was a sudden dramatic and complete collapse of handicrafts. All this helped in consolidating British rule all over the country.

The new transport system helped the British rule in another way too. British rulers and administrators who formerly took long time to reach India, could show their presence here in a comparatively short time.⁷

If the railways proved a powerful instrument and technique in consolidating and stabilizing British rule in India, they proved an equally strong means to its liquidation. They provided the material basis for organizing the Indian people on the socio-political level and to develop a strong national struggle for independence. The organization of political parties like the Indian National Congress, National Liberal Federation, Youth Leagues, All India Women's Conference, Trade Unions and Kisan Sabhas, etc. were facilitated by the construction of railways, roads, buses and telegraph systems on an all-India basis.

Besides, the scientific and cultural achievements of one region were made the property of the entire nation with the

7. It may casually be mentioned that in old days a man who left England to serve in colonial administration, whether as Viceroy or Governor, or in some subordinate post of administrative apparatus, came to India for the work of a lifetime. It took him, in fact, no inconsiderable part of a lifetime to get here. When Clive came to India in 1742 he was more than a year upon the way; when Warren Hastings first came out in 1750 he spent more than eight to nine months upon the journey, and when he finally returned in 1785 his passage occupied four months, and was regarded as exceptionally quick. Secondly, it may also be noted that the average interval between the issue of a despatch and the receipt of a reply was one and a half years. [Sir Thomas Raleigh, ed. by, *Lord Curzon in India: Being a collection of his speeches* (London, Macmillan & Co., 1906), p. 12.]

assistance of railways. Philosophers, scientists, artists and sociologists were exchanged from one centre of learning to another. Conferences and shows were organized on an all-India level.

Two historical events in Indian politics, in which the transport and communications system also played a very significant role, assisted in the growth of national consciousness. They were the shifting of the capital by the British Government and the outbreak of the First World War.

In 1911 the British Government shifted its capital from Calcutta to Delhi. With this transfer the administrative and clerical staff, which was more or less monopolized by the intelligentsia of Bengal and Madras Provinces, also moved to the new capital. In this mobilization the railways played a very significant role. For the first time they brought people from Bengal and Madras to Delhi on an unprecedented scale. Never in the history of Northern India had the intelligentsia of Bengal and Madras exercised such an influence over the political affairs of the country as now. Being the first on the administrative staff they gradually spread over the whole of Northern India. For the first time a Bengali or a Madrasi was appointed to administer affairs in the remote corners of Sind and Punjab, the North-West Frontier and tribal regions. This mingling of the Bengali and Madrasi with the people of these regions assisted in generating a national consciousness in them. A broader and bright vision of Indian nationality began to emerge in their minds. From the Himalayan ranges down to the coastal tracts of Rameshwaram and from the desert of Sind to the fertile Ganges plane the Indian peninsula began to appear as a single entity embodying in itself a culture and civilization manifesting unity in diversity.

Like the people of Bengal and Madras, people from North-Western India travelled to Bombay, Calcutta and other distant towns, cities and places in search of professions like teaching, clerical jobs, medical practice. And they were also benefited likewise.

Three years after the transfer of the capital to Delhi, the First World War began. During the War a large movement of newly recruited soldiers began from one end of the country

to the other on the way to Europe and the Middle East to help the Allied Powers. The soldiers of North-Western India (including N.W.F.P.) travelled by the railways through the Central Provinces and Maharashtra region to reach Bombay from where they were moved to Europe. Similarly, those recruited from Madras Presidency and nearby areas travelled to the North to reach Karachi whence they were shipped to Mesopotamia and other strategic places in the West Asia. The movement of these people from the remote rural areas in their respective provinces by rail and road from North to South and *vice versa*, led to a feeling of national unity among them.

Roads

Hand in hand with the expansion of the railways in India went on the construction of roads. The work in this field was as rapid as that of the other. By the end of the nineteenth century there were 37,000 miles of metalled and 136,000 miles of unmetalled roads.⁷ By the end of 1916-17 roughly over 200,000 miles of roads, of which 55,000 were metalled and 145,000 were unmetalled, were maintained by the public authorities in India. And the total expenditure on roads by 1917-18 was Rs. 10,800,000.⁸ By 1939 the mileage of metalled roads had risen to 59,000 miles.⁹ These roads were being controlled by the Government of India. During this time the use of motor-cars and motor cycles (along with the ordinary cycle) also increased rapidly. By the end of the First World War their use by Europeans and upper class Indians became common in the larger towns and cities and suburbs. The import of motor-cars increased from some 3,000 in 1913 to post-war quinquennial average of about 8,000.¹⁰ Like the railways the development of roads also assisted in the process of further breaking down the self-sufficient and isolated nature of the village. It linked the interior of the country with its railway junctions. Thus it played a significant role in breaking up the compact character of the village community.

8. Vera Anstey, n.1, p. 129.

9. M. Visvesvaraya, *Reconstructing India* (London, P.S. King & Son, 1920), p. 211.

10. Vera Anstey, n. 1, p. 129.

The road system built up by the alien regime included a number of trunk roads, stretching diagonally across the country. Their measurement went into thousands of miles and formed a framework linking most of the important centres of population, industries, trade, as well as strategic points and subsidiary roads. This media of transport became an important ingredient in the growth of a unified national economy. It created national consciousness in the mercantile classes of India. Traders and craftsmen frequently journeyed from place to place and began to take interest in the emotional integration of India.

Besides the upper classes the mass of lower classes were also mobilized. Like the railways, the road transport made possible the mass migration of people from one place to another. To get new employment or to improve their prospects the poorer people often used road transport from North to South and East to West, i.e, from Peshawar to Madras and from Calcutta to Bombay. This led to the establishment of a social and cultural cohesion.

Communications

Regarding the development of communications in India in the early decades of the twentieth century, Mr. K.T. Shah states that "the communications service of India has not benefited...for public use.... For War time requirements, no doubt, such revolutionary inventions as Radio direction finding devices, facilitating aerial navigation even in the dark, and other connected improvements, were utilized even in the Indian armed forces but that did not mean advance in the popular service available to the Indian people. For one thing, the technical personnel, skilled in their use, was mostly of foreign extraction. The material and equipment were also of foreign manufacture not available or produced in this country."¹¹

Though the above statement contains a substantial element of truth, the development of postal services, telephones, radio

11. *Ibid*, p. 130.

12. *Communications: A Report of the Sub-Committee of National Planning Committee* (Bombay, Vora and Co., 1948), p. 126.

and wireless functioned as a powerful instrument for exchanging messages between parties separated geographically from one another. All sorts of messages—state messages, trade, industrial and commercial messages and news, social and private messages—were conveyed from one end of the country to another. Like the railways and roadways this too made for closer contact, and radio helped further.

CHAPTER V

CULTURAL PROGRESS

A— Literature

*Come onwards come! Ye sons of Ind'
The motherland your aid implores.
With dauntless hearts and ardent zeal,
Enlist ye in your Country's cause.
Let one resolve your actions guide,
One spirit move your heart and soul;
Awake arise with ardour fresh,
and chant a nobler— manlier strain.*

[Extract from the song recited by Jyotisindra Nath Tagore in the annual session of the Indian National Congress held in 1901; The full text appeared in Indian Review (Madras. G. A. Natesan, 1907), Vol. VIII, p. 643].

With the introduction of the phase of modernization in India the circle of the literary figures was also gradually widened. The members of the middle classes who were brought up under the modern system of English education, and whose social feelings and economic attitudes manifested the spirit of the newly growing social renaissance, emerged as a powerful literary force which could no longer be compelled to continue in isolation from the literary point of view. The joining of the literary activities by the middle classes corresponded with their emergence on the political front of nationalism. The emergence was a manifestation of the historical role that the middle classes were destined to play in the particular context.

Impact of Modern Ideas

As a result of European impact, of course, through English, notably of English and French literature, a move-

ment of protest gained vitality in the literature. It emancipated itself from old chivalrism, mysticism, unfruitful adventures like those of renunciation and the luxurious environment developed as a result of its monopolized patronization by the royal Hindu and Muslim courts and artistocratic families in the previous centuries. Through the study of the standard works of prominent Western writers like Mill, Bentham, Voltaire, Rousseau and others the new ideas of democracy, freedom of the individual and equitable distribution of social power, absence of racial discrimination and such other liberal conceptions, however vague, were introduced in the Indian writings. There was displayed a missionary zeal to abolish privilege, exclusiveness, complacency and callousness and tyranny of obscurantism. For instance, Bharati in Tamil and Tagore in Bengali literature (who were personalities and powers to be reckoned with) visualized the emergence of an independent resurgent India in the not distant future, where would be established a classless society with a systematic planning. Ignorant prejudices would be eradicated and all the people in India would be incorporated in a cultural and political system, with equal rights and opportunities for all. The hostile competition would be substituted by friendly co-operation between peoples so that they might mutually assist and contribute to the material and moral good of one another and thereby of the nation, Bharati sang:

Whatever may befall us,
 We shall equally share it.
 Thirty crores shall strive
 Else all will dare defeat...
 We are all of the same caste and race,
 We are children of Bharat all.
 We are equal in law and stature,
 and every one is Bharat's king.¹

A scientific sense of historical evolution

Besides, Indian writers also studied the masterpieces of prominent Western writers like Hugo, Dumas, Moliere,

S. Prema, ed. and trans. by, *Bharati in English Verse, A Selected collection of Bharati's poems* (Madras, Higginbothams Ltd., 1958), pp. 60 and 63.

Balzac, Flaubert, Maupassant, Zola, Tolstoy, Turgenev, Tehekov, Ruskin and Gorky. They made them acquainted with the fine and crude forms of realism or what is called a scientific sense of history. This adaptation of European realism helped the *litterateurs* to be aware of and interpret the socio-economic conflicts prevalent in the Indian society.

The most representative figures of this new development were writers like Fakir Mohan Senapati, Prem Chand, Sharat Chander and Kanhiya Lal Maniklal Munshi. Though their styles were dissimilar, yet they were bound by one common feature. All of them took their stand upon Indian realities as they were prevalent in the contemporary period. This adjustment was governed by true idealism. Though their concept of history was not what was inserted in the curriculum of colleges and universities with minor exceptions, yet their understanding and sense of the contemporary phase was genuine. To display the conflict of interests between the landed aristocracy and poverty-stricken peasantry and similar classes the extraordinarily capable Fakir Mohan Senapati wrote *Chhamana Athaguntha* (Six Acres, Eight Decimals) and other novels and short stories in satirical Oriya language. Due to the stark realism and high moral tone and love for the people vibrating in them these writings became unrivalled and were considered a *must* by the people. These writings made him essentially a man of the people. When Bankim of Bengal was engaged in writing about the feudal princesses and chieftains, *Begums* and *Nawabs*, of the newly growing middle class of Bengal in highly sanskritized prose, Fakir Chand was searching his characters from among the simple and illiterate social classes such as weavers, barbers, farmers, the *chowkidars*, the arrogant and mischievous maid-servants in the house of the landlords, the bluffing pleaders and the Western-educated extravagant sons of the feudal and mercantile families. For taking the common man as his subject and providing the common people's rough but racy speech the standard and dignity of literature he came to be considered as people's writer in India. His writings are a mirror of natural life. He thus left behind characters that have become an integral part of national consciousness. In this writings was witnessed not only the defiance by the new generation of the old order and the traditional values but also the rural and urban realism perhaps in its

most successful form. Describing the contemporary times Senapati wrote that congregations assembled before the courts in those days and people seemed to have become more learned and well-mannered. Who now cared for the rule of Panchayat? The English Law laid down, "See chap, if you commit any crime and we have got the lawful witness or circumstantial evidence, then we ought must penalize you." The cleverer said, "Alright, but we well know how not to let you secure evidence," and the pleaders patting their clients exclaimed, "Don't bother. Bring our fees and we shall make black seen white and *vice-versa*." All this had resulted in not cognizing the clever and monied who went scotfree after committing a hundred crimes while the poor got entangled in this mess. Spending money in litigation had brought ruin to the plaintiff and the accused while the twelve devilish spirits prospered on this contribution.²

Prem Chand renowned as the Gorky of Indian literature, was perhaps the greatest among all the Indian novelists. He reflected in his powerful writings the feelings of almost the entire society during that phase of transformation. There existed his real art. His setting was seething with social idealism of life. Realism requires the knowledge of the widespread material process and Prem Chand did not feel shy of this materialism. He succeeded in depicting the whims and emotions, standards and values, problems and complexities which were determining the course of the socio-cultural and economico-political behaviour of the lower middle class peasantry and untouchable in particular, and of the landlord, industrialist and the working class in general. In fact he provided speech to the 'dumb driven cattle' and invested them with a halo of greatness. Thus he became a phenomenon in the sphere of literary contribution. He emerged as spokesman and champion of the accumulated hatred and bitterness of the lower classes against the socio-economic exploitation by the so-called upper class guardians of society. The economic struggle as well as the political awakening of the masses was thus made evident. He was a powerful instrument in tracing the factors responsible for perpetuating moral degradation. In the following extract taken from his *Seva-Sadan* published in

2. *Six Acres, Eight Decimals*, Hindi ed. (New Delhi, Sahitya Akademy), p. 55.

1914, is very well reflected this truth:

We have no right to treat the prostitutes as fallen women. It is meanness on our part to take them in this light. We who accept bribes day and night, charge heavy rates of interest, suck the blood of the poor, and cut the throat of the helpless, are not justified in looking down upon any limb of society. We are the greatest sinners, the worst criminals, the meanest of all people. We who call ourselves educated, civilized, cultured perpetuate injustice on them. Prostitution thrives on our patronage.³

From the extract quoted above, it is well-evident that such literary creations were of greatest importance because Prem Chand protested against the socially harmful tendencies of his age. At this critical juncture he played the role of a historical nationalist writer and strengthened the national forces of the new renaissance.

Like his other contemporary Indian writers not only in Hindi but also in various other languages Prem Chand did not lag to draw the attention of social reformers towards the innumerable religious *fakeers* and *sadhus* misusing the teachings of the holy scriptures. This progressive social outlook is reflected in his short stories like the *child*, *invitation*, *sadhu*.

Similarly, the success attained by Sharat Chander Chatterjee in the traditional social problems was phenomenal and continued to be so till his demise in 1938. He took the reading public of Bengal 'by storm' by his realistic and powerful writings. Hence he came to exercise immense influence with a very large section of the Indian people, especially those of Bengal. His critics were practically silenced in a short span of time. Their criticism went unaffected. Such widespread and genuine fame had perhaps not been obtained by any other Bengali writer, perhaps not even by Bakim Chandra and Rabindranath Tagore. Like Prem Chand he had

3. Prem Chand, *Seva-Sadan* (Allahabad, 1943 ed.), p. 183.

a sincere sympathy for the unfortunate, the oppressed and the dispossessed. Both of them succeeded in depicting it in unflinching style. It extended to the women of town and village victimized by adverse situation, the vagabonds and the wasters—those who lived on the fringe of bare living. It evolved a substitute pattern of behaviour and manners, a pattern that might be abhorred by the more luckily existing but ultra-unsympathetic, was nevertheless one in which there existed a spirit to mobilize the life for its advancement. Because this spirit was troubled by yearnings and passions which were refused a smooth expression by the existing superficial, nevertheless, powerful hindrances; it was ready to violate them and struggle against them. The characters possessing this insurgent spirit, despite their living in the outskirts of cultured life, had the dignity of humanity. They were lively and full of enthusiasm in contrast with the decadent and hypocritical bourgeois class. They were full in contrast to the hollow men. Moreover, they were rooted in the soil. They belonged to the materialistic against the metaphysical world, however, miserable it might have been.

Both Prem Chand and Sharat had attained special characteristics in illustrating the literary upsurge against the injustices towards women among all the characters sympathized by them. These women characters were devoted fighters against the existing retrogressive social *status quo*. They were not the *lulita-labanga-lata* of Jayadev or Bihari, or the mooning kind of women found in some of the Indian artistic paintings. Their tough and strong feelings and expressions were reported to have created rebellions in many families. From this it is evident that Sharat was basically opposed to the conventional practice of viewing the human existence always through a stereo-typed social code and habit. In Marathi Mama Warerkar's *One Amongst Seven Lakh* may also be put in this category.

Like their contemporaries in social and political spheres the progressive literary forces were keenly trying to bring out the social adjustment of the people in India in order to speed up the progress of their political agitation for *Purna swaraj*. They were pained by the treatment meted out to the lower castes by considering them just like aliens and thus injuring their interests. Though no long poems and

ballads were produced against the *sati* system yet calculated measures were taken against the old tradition of child marriage, untouchability and widow-remarriage. It was held that the eradication of social prejudices, ethnological differences and religious bickerings with a missionary zeal was indispensable to the achievement of national integration. In this connection Tagore's observation is worth commendable. He enquired, had Indians an illustration in the entire world where the people were not permitted to "mingle their blood" for one another except by force or for mercenary purposes? Indians must give full recognition to this fact that their social restrictions were still oppressive, so much so as to make men cowards. The social habit of mind which impelled them to make the life of their fellow-beings a burden to them where they varied from even in such a matter as their choice of food, was sure to persist in their political organization and thus culminate in creating "engines of coercion" to crush every rational difference which was the sign of life. And tyranny would only add to the inevitable lies and hypocrisy in their political life.⁴

Likewise, the contemporary literature protested against the old order existing in the sphere of economics. The *Deserted Village* by Gold Smith was translated by Shridhar Pathak in Hindi in the early twenties. Maithili Sharan's *Bharat-Bharati* moralized on the situation created by the rapidly changing Indian economy, especially the decay of the villages and the growth of the industrial cities in the same nostalgic emphasis as in the Urdu *Musaddas* by Hali. Besides, several sketches like *Kafan*, *Bava* and short stories by Maithili Sharan and others exposed the misery of the people trekking long distances in search of livelihood. These writings displayed the consequences of the crumbling rural people, leading to the growth of a new political consciousness in them. As a result they arrayed in the struggle of rights and privileges and attached themselves with all-India nationalist movement for the liberation of the nation from the aliens and their domestic allies like the feudal lords. This spirit found its expression in the following folk song:

4. Rabindra Nath Tagore, *Nationalism* (London, Macmillan & co. 1920, Fourth ed.), p. 124.

O foreigners, your boat is doomed;
Yours funeral procession begins on the river.⁵

The above developments show that in the strangling disadvantages and greatly unfavourable political, economic and social conditions the modern Indian literature is an impressive description of *litterateurs* struggling perpetually against odd situations, the elements of neglect, apathy, exploitation and frustration. However, in these movements the *litterateurs* were optimistic of their success and the inevitability of the coming of the new era. They appealed to every section of the society to devote themselves for the progress of the nation. This optimism found its proper expression a few years later in Kalindi Charan Panigrahi's following song:

And quietly I work at my song of the coming Age!
I play the tune of a magnificent life
That admits the entire living and lifeless universe
As free; a life defying death
Masters all mournings and bereavements;
Wherein dance the ripples of joy;
The life that marches on and admits a
value for everything.⁶

Patriotism

With the beginning of the twentieth century the literature in various Indian languages grew up with a considerable speed. Nationalistic trends and tendencies manifesting in the progressive development of the political movements launched by the Indian National Congress such as Anti-Partition agitation in Bengal, Swadeshi and Boycott movements, also began to find an expression in this literary development. Patriotic writings were produced which provided impetus to the political forces.

One of the representative figures of the patriotic literature in the early days of the twentieth century was Tagore. His

5. Krishna Deo Upadhyaya, ed. by, translation into English by P.C. Gupta, *Bhojpuri Gram-geet* (Allahabad, 1919), p. 384.

6. A.V. Rajeshwara Rao, ed. by, *Modern Indian Poetry*, an anthology of writings (New Delhi, Kavita, 1958), pp. 64-5.

advent was really a phenomenon in the current literature. He came to be renowned as the "Poet Laureate of Asia". The tremendous force of his genius was responsible for an almost fabulous literary output comprising many lyrics, songs and novels. The publication of *Naibedya* in 1902 displayed his patriotic genius. These patriotic writings were sometimes the very quintessence of the Indian literature. They were mostly close-knit sonnets embodying the poet's national consciousness exhorting the people to devote themselves whole-heartedly in uplifting their "unfortunate motherland". This phase of his life is the most significant in patriotic songs which are superb in their own manners. In them sometimes he asks his readers to appraise the glorious antiquity of India when the noble illustrations of self-sacrifice were shown to the world and greatest sacrifices made by heroes who did not care for their existence in its service. Sometimes they are a exhorting call to duty and sometimes they inspire the reader with the hope of an India, independent and raised in the comity of nations.

A few years after occurred the Bengal Partition and patriotism absorbed Tagore's entire self. Besides his active participation in the public demonstrations against this act of the Government, he composed many patriotic songs. They became very popular in public. He exhorted his countrymen not to be afraid of the imperial alien power in the following poem:

Oh, people of India!
Don't be afraid and shy of luxury loving merchant class of England who are mad in their own power.

In front of the contemptuous eyes of the rich West
put on an appearance of peace and serenity and
live your life of innocence and simplicity.

Don't listen to what they say...

Whatever seems to be great and has accumulated in
heaps in front of your eyes, don't lose your heart
in front of it and don't bow before it.⁷

7. Rabindranath Tagore, *Poems* (Calcutta, Visva-Bharati, 1942), p. 86.

In his vision he drew the portrayal of the new India emerging after the end of slavery. He planned to build up the new nation on democratic and secular lines providing sufficient scope for the growth of individual freedom and equality:

Where the mind is without fear and the head is held high;

Where knowledge is free;

Where the world has not been broken up into fragments by narrow domestic wall;

Where the clear stream of reason has not lost its way into the dreary desert sand of dead habit;

Where the mind is led forward by thee into ever-widening thought and action

Into that heaven of freedom, my Father! let my country awake.⁸

Those who have read his speeches and writings are aware how intensely he loved his own country. In his well-known address in Bengali entitled *Kartar Icchay Karma*, for example, he passionately pleaded in his masterly style for the right of self-determination for his fatherland.

He also believed that people shall have to work their hardest to make their country great. Those who made sacrifices for their country's sake were indeed her real servants. They did not fear to die for the country. "True patriotism will never be", "wrote he, in our countrymen unless they can visualize the motherland. We must make a goddess of her."⁹ If the people should perish in the endeavour to protect the country from the innumerable snares of religion, custom and selfishness they would at least die happy. Those who are not "true sons", declared he, of the "motherland" do cease to "encumber her lap". They must not feel apologetic about the country of their birth—whether it be about its traditions,

8. *Collected Poems and Plays of Rabindranath Tagore* (London, Macmillan & Co., 1952), p. 16.

9. N.B. Sen, ed. by, *Wit and Wisdom of Tagore* (New Delhi, New Book Society of India, 1961), p. 258.

faith, or its scriptures—neither to others nor even to themselves.¹⁰

As already stated, with the beginning of modernization in the Assamese poetry the old, narrow outlook yielded place to a progressive outlook. The new poetry sang of freedom from political dependence, social injustice, and freedom for all comprehending the unity of the nation. This new movement was led by Kamalakanta Bhattacharya. In his poetry is reflected the strand of patriotism. Influenced and inspired by the patriotic activities of the revolutionary clandestine societies organized in India on the pattern of Italy and Ireland during the last quarter of the 19th century his patriotism urged him to exhort his countrymen to imbibe the spirit of the times and to follow the revolutionary tactics of Western leaders, especially those of Italy; and if his advice was followed:

Then will be born hundreds of Mazzinis
from out of neglected stones,
And hundreds of Garibbaldis too,
to shed lustre on the soil of India...¹¹

Absence of freedom and despondency accompanying the voices of the country roused him to poignant protest. His poems exhaled a new ideal of nationalism, new values of life and a stimulus for progress. He felt pride at being an Indian and in this pride resided mainly the power and charm of his stirring songs.

In the period under study the Tamil literature advanced vigorously the cause of nationalism. One of the foremost exponents of this nationalism was Subramaniya Bharati (1882-1921). To him patriotism became an article of religious faith. His first collection of poems, *Songs of Freedom* was published in 1908. In his poems he gave an articulate expression to national solidarity and devotion,

10. Ibid, pp. 257-58.

11. Translated by Dr. Prafulladata Goswami, cited by B.K. Barua, *Modern Assamese Literature* (Gauhati, Lawyer Book Stall, 1957), p. 10.

vigour and sacrifice for the cause of the country, which the *Bande Matram* movement and later the activities of Lokmanya Tilak reflected. In Tamilnadu young boys and girls at schools, colleges and universities, and their elders at home, made the stirring influence of his verse an integral part of their own emotional equipment. He was for them not a mere name and symbol, but an active force striving to shape the future. And the people also worshipped him not only because he eloquently expressed in his poems the sentiment of patriotism but also because he produced a poetry which was—and still is—an object of national pride. Many of the songs of this poet reverberated with so much intense patriotism and freedom that they became a universal possession all over the country. Through his resounding verse he exhorted the “Mother Bharat” to remanifest its individuality:

The day has dawned: our penance have borne fruit,
 And the dark night-shades are gone..
 Thousands are we your servants all,
 Crowding and waiting to make obeissance
 to Thee.

Still, still dost thou slumber, ‘O Mother
 ‘Tis strange! Rise, Mother mine!..
 The peel of freedom surges far and wide..
 See the people line up the streets!
 How long shall we wait, what penances perform,
 Is it right that you should be slumbering yet?
 Can the mother sleep when the child awakes her?
 Is their mother’s heart moved by the cries of
 the child?
 Come, come, and give us the blessing of your reign!¹²

Likewise with deep devotion and faith Sarojini Naidu exhorted her “Mother India” to awaken:

Like bride high-mated with the spheres,
 Beget new glories from thine ageless womb!
 The nations that in fettered darkness weep

12. S. Prema, n. 1, p. 46.

Crave thee to lead them where great mornings
break.¹³

Mrs. Sarojini Naidu depicted the Motherland as sovereign empress of the past. Socially and politically Mrs. Naidu was a rebel. In the poems written in her earlier years we see though only implicitly, a sombre note of her realization of India's sorrows and struggles. Sometimes through the morning song of fishermen and sometimes through the echoes in forest she exhorted her countrymen to imbibe the spirit of national consciousness. She published only three slim volumes of verse for she practically stopped writing after Jallianwala Bagh and dedicated herself to active work in the cause of the country's liberation. Her first collection of poems, *The Golden Threshold* appeared in 1905 and established her reputation as a poet of distinctive spirit. Some years later two more collections of her poems, *The Bird of Time* (1912) and *The Broken Wing* (1917) appeared. These poems are imbued with the spirit and faith in the ultimate progress of the country from her backwardness of centuries. The extraordinary musical quality of these verses won her the title of "Nightingale of India". Free from the sectarian feelings and gifted with imagination she pleaded for the establishment of a new India for the people of all creeds, classes, castes and communities. She stood for the unity of India in all its phases, culturally and geographically. With this optimism she laboured throughout her life; first, to prevent the cleavage from becoming unbearable and secondly, to redeem the political movement from the bitterness of sectarian rancour.

Resolute in spirit Sarojini Naidu was in the great tradition of nationalist poets. In devotion she referred to the greatness of the "Mother" and the magnificence of her in rearing her people. Through the folk singing of the peasants she praised the "Earth" in her "Harvest Hymn":

Sweet and omnipotent mother, O Earth!
Thine is the plentiful bosom that feeds us,
Thine is the womb where our riches have birth,

13. Sarojini Naidu, *The Sceptred Flute*, songs of India (Allahabad, Kitabistan, 1946, 2nd ed.), p. 58.

We bring thee our love and our garlands for
tribute
With gifts of thy opulent giving we come;
O source of our manifold grandness, we hail
thee.¹⁴

A similar patriotic trend was encouraged by V.D. Savarkar in Marathi by contributing his famous *Sagar Pran Talmalta* or "An Exile on the Sea-Shore" in which he showed an Indian in foreign land praying to the ocean:

Carry me back to the motherland, O Ocean!
I am suffering agony.
I daily saw you washing the feet of my motherland
and you told me once that you would carry me
on your back and return me safe home.
I trust in you.
I left my mother telling her that I would return
soon abler in uplifting her by experience of
the world.
But I have been deceived,
How can I bear separation from my land
for ever.¹⁵

Similarly in Gujarati literature the "Motherland" was eulogized as something supreme imbibing the spirit of infallibility. It was conceived to be very kind to its "children" but

14. Ibid, p. 77,

15. The poem further continues:

The learning I have would be only a burden to me if it be
not spent in the salvation of the motherland.
There are many stars in the firmament,
But I love mother's cottage,
Why do you break your word ?
Why do you laugh at me?
Are you afraid of England, the mistress of seas?
Are you deceiving my mother, because she is helpless?
But fellow, England itself is afraid,
Mother is not weak.
She will tell all this to Agastya,
Who once drank you dry, as if you were a tumblerful.

[Report of Native Papers published in the Bombay Presidency for
the week ending 2 October 1909 (confd.) No. 40, pp. 13-14.]

unsurpassingly fearful *Ranchandi* arrayed against the alien forces oppressing its very existence.

Prem Chand was the builder of nationalism in India not because he acted as a spokesman of the economically down-troddens and social outcastes but also because he openly advocated patriotism. Stirred by the patriotic upsurge manifested in the national movements launched by the Congress to counteract the void created in national life by the Partition of Bengal he could not remain a silent observer or an isolated and disinterested entity. Acting under great financial limitations and the obligation of governmental job he had no other channel except to express his patriotic sentiments before the general public through writing. To reflect the feelings of the contemporary period he wrote his story, "*Duniya Ka Sabse Anmol Ratan*" with a highly patriotic theme. The central idea of the story was that the most precious possession in this world, is one's blood if shed in the service of one's "Motherland". In another short novel *Vardan* (The Boon) also written during these days though not published till 1912-13, the author displayed a mother praying daily for a son. When her prayers were heard, she was asked that what kind of son she wanted—rich or strong, or clever? But she demanded a son who would do something for his country.

During these days he also wrote another patriotic story "*Yeh Meri Matribhumi Hai*" (This is my Motherland). In 1907 appeared *Soz-e-Vatan*, a collection of five patriotic stories in Urdu. Judged by modern literary standard the collection was by no means revolutionary in content yet its chief merit lay in its vivid treatment of patriotic emotions. The readers may go through this collection now without being affected in any extraordinary manner, but thirty years ago it had the effect of a small but well-placed bomb under a tank. The collection manifested a change in author's career because this embodied his emphatic dislike of the perpetuation of the alien rule for whose dislodging the glorification of patriotism through the pen portraits was deemed an elementary necessity of the contemporary politics.

The collection did not go unattended by the vigilance of the Civil Service. For it the appearance of the stories was an open manifestation of sedition against a political system

established by "law". The authorities of the district, besides giving a stern warning for his behaviour despite being a government employee, organized a bonfire in public place of the existing 500 copies of the book. The author was made to witness the public ceremony.

With the beginning of the modern era in its development the Malayalam literature also contributed to the growth of national consciousness in India. The pioneering figure of this movement was Vallathol. Even before passing to this new transformation he was the most eminent poet of the classical school. He translated the whole of Valmiki *Ramayana*. The force responsible for ensuring this new nationalist change in the life of Vallathol, was the emergence of the considerably powerful nationalist movement that was influencing the entire nation in its onward development. The participation of Indian solidiers to get their rulers win in the First World War and a number of other factors unleashed the forces of national revivalism. They created an urge for yearning a new life all over India. In Malayalam literature Vallathol became the "interpreter of this yearning for new life, a trumpet voice of nationalism, not in the narrow spirit of exclusion, but in the positive manner of creating a national image—noble, high-spirited and idealistic."¹⁶ His poetic genius created innumerable poems. In them the nationalist sentiment found its fullest expression. He wrote on all aspects of the national glory. His famous poem "Motherland" written in his younger days is imbued with great political awareness of a young representative poet of a conscious nation which after stupor of centuries was gradually but surely coming to realize the great potentialities inherent in its people *vis-a-vis* the foreign rule. It was a clear call to his people to know themselves and their own comparatively overwhelming strength which was far more than sufficient to eradicate the foreign rule. Through these writings Vallathol gave perhaps the greatest momentum to the spirit of nationalism. All his shorter poems were compiled in 8 volumes in the series *Sahitya Manjuri*.

The first decade of the modern century was a period of

16. *Contemporary Indian Literature: A Symposium* (New Delhi, Sahitya Akademy, 1957), p. 126.

intensive political activity. Russo-Japanese War unleashed many forces which had a tremendous impact over the political agitations like Swadeshi and Boycott. The slogan of *Bande Matram* did much to develop national consciousness. The Indian people responded greatly to the demand of *swaraj*. Under the impact of this new movement men of action became men of letters to organise an intensive literary campaign of patriotism. Like other literatures of the period the Indo-Anglican literature also reflected the progress of this political movement. The leaders of this literary movement were the eminent personalities like Aurobindo.

In those days Aurobindo revealed himself as a manysided genius. The qualities of political thinker, philosopher, an ardent revolutionary—all had merged into one creative personality. These qualities found their practical expression in developing his interest in liberal universalism. Before his departure to Pondicherry where he became involved in mysticism and which took away a powerful figure from the liberation movement of the country, he was a powerful personality of the nascent India. Like Tagore and Vivekananda he also made a significant contribution in building up cultural nationalism. Perhaps it would be correct to say that his creative personality found its best expression in literature and theoretical aspect of politics rather than in practical fight for national liberation. In his literary contributions he perhaps symbolized the cultural potentialities of his race and nation. For his contemporary generation he became the symbol of the new spirit of militant nationalism that emerged as a powerful force on the Indian political scene. In the wake of militant spirit the author eulogized in somewhat mystical style the socio-cultural and religio-political potentialities of his country. He wrote:

Ours is the eternal land, the eternal people, the eternal religion, whose strength, greatness, holiness may be overclouded but never even for a moment, utterly cease. The hero, the Rishi, the saint are the national fruits of our Indian soil, and there has been no age in which they have not been born.¹⁷

17. Haridas Mukherjee & Uma Mukherjee, *Sri Aurobindo and the New Thought in Indian Politics* (Calcutta, 1958), p. 146.

Patriotism also got encouragement in the Assamese literature. Besides the appearance of the verse full of nationalist fervour there also came out certain Assamese songs which exercised a great influence in the growth of national consciousness in Assam. Lakshmiram Barua's *Sangit-Kosh* published in 1911 drew much inspiration from Tagore's *Gitanjali* imbued with mystic devotionism and patriotism. Another collection of the patriotic songs *Phuloni* (Garden) came out in the name of Padmadhar Chaliha, and was published in 1915. Still another patriotic singer Kamalakanta Bhattacharya wrote his *Bauli* (The Dishevelled) during these years.

An important Assamese poet of the period under study was Ambikagiri Rai Chaudhary. He composed a number of stirring poems on nationalism, while in jail as a political prisoner. Some of these songs have since been translated into English and published in a book form under the title "*Songs of the Cell*". These verses were composed in accompaniment to the clanging of hammer which was given to him to break the stones as a political prisoner.

Due to a number of factors Urdu literature generally remained isolated or indifferent towards the rapidly growing nationalistic sentiments in India. Basically, the Urdu literature had flourished under the patronage of *Badshahs*, *Nawabs* and other remnants of feudalism in the past. Both the Urdu poet and prose-writer though held in high esteem, found very little scope to bring literary wisdom within the reach of the common people. Their own self-interest led them to flatter or praise the outmoded Muslim monarchs and feudals, including their entire sophisticated paraphernalia. It was not the Urdu literature that mainly regulated the socio-cultural and religio-political outlook of the feudals who patronized the literature but the sophisticated life at courts that moulded or governed the outlook and approach of the writers. And to be like their patrons the Urdu writers inculcated all those vices of drinking and romance, which had already transformed the feudal structure into a moribund institution. Perhaps, it will not be an exaggeration to refer to an expert's characterizing of Urdu poets having an insatiable thirst for wine. In his view the "Urdu Lover" wanted to get drunk; he longed for drink; he begged the cup bearer to relent "to shed the light of favour" on him

gently and with compassion in her eyes.

In the next phase, influenced by the Muslim renaissance set in by the Aligarh Movement, majority, if not all, of the Urdu *litterateurs* perhaps felt more akin with the British regime than with the nationalist elements interested in its eradication. The manoeuvring tactics of the alien rulers, like their withdrawal from India would obviously culminate in the imposition of Hindu culture and civilization over that of the Muslims—perhaps appeared to be more appealing to them than the perpetual exploitation of indigenous potentialities by the foreign rulers, their own upper classes and other domestic allies. Moreover, no less significant role in keeping the Urdu literature aloof from the nationalistic trends was played by the revivalist activities of the Hindu national leaders and *litterateurs*. Nevertheless, it is irrefutable that in the beginning of the twentieth century Iqbal, besides being attracted by the intellectual force of the Aligarh Movement in the youthful formative period of his life, found the appeal of the newly surging Indian nationalism irresistible. Almost spell-bound by its urge he wrote some impressive poems which laid emphasis on the ideal of Indian nationhood. He urged the politically and socially conscious intelligentsia as well as the common men to work with sincerity to foster the feelings of national progress. The ancient glories of India resuscitated by the contemporary revivalists stirred his imagination. And in an inspiring manner he also wrote of the ancient glories of Hindustan in the days of Rama and exhorted people to work in a comradely spirit to maintain the national heritage.¹⁸ With touching eloquence he called upon the entire nation to establish inter-communal co-operation to bring to a successful end its depressing condition of servitude imposed by an alien regime. He firmly believed that the latter was rarely interested in sponsoring the welfare of his people. The enchanting beauty of the Indian landscape, the splendid charm of the dawn, the dreamy magic of the rains and Himalayas—all these drew from him songs of passionate character. His famous song *Sare Jehan Se Achchha* remains even to this day the best of all the patriotic

18. For further study see his poem on Rama inserted in *Kulliyat-i-Iqbal* (Lahore, 1936), p.58.

poems and lyrics composed by all the poets of the era. The song fulfils, broadly speaking, all the ingredients of a national anthem free from communal strings. With confidence it can be stated that Iqbal was one of those few poets in modern Indian history who have enriched the repertory of popular national songs with their creations and thus inculcated a spirit of national consciousness in the Indian people.

There occurred, however, complete change in his petty-bourgeois outlook during his stay in Europe for higher studies. Before his departure for Europe in 1905 there seemed nothing distinctive which might have frustrated his vigorous patriotism and national consciousness. But the three years trip to Europe led him to experience much which marked a definite departure from his strong liking for the cult of nationalism. All that he saw in Europe profoundly depressed him. He saw with his own eyes the narrow and selfish nationalism of Europe. He found it to be the main cause of the most of the political troubles brewing up in Europe as a result of the acquisitive, annihilating imperialist and aggressive rivalries and conflicts of monarchs and capitalist classes providing sustenance to the very institutions of the greed, hate, violation and exploitation. Instead of harnessing the powerful instrument of power for developing the forces of nature and thus in ultimate phase pressing them into the service of humanity in order to attain peace, prosperity and enlightenment, were being in day to day practice greatly manipulated for the unaltruistic ends of destruction and misery. In disillusion Iqbal witnessed this dreadful cataclysm gathering momentum for the annihilation of human civilization and culture. These things raised serious doubts and misgivings in his mind as to the value of certain concepts which in his youth he had displayed inclination to acknowledge and assimilate with great enthusiasm. He believed that any doctrine which based its anatomy on exploitation and hatred and failed to appreciate the basic tenets of humanity was unacknowledgeable for the simple reason that it militated against the development and expansion of the spiritual self. In his famous poem "Warning to the West" composed in March 1907 he castigated the Western civilization in utter disgust:

O' dwellers of the cities of the West,
This habitation of God is not a shop,

and that which you regard as true coin,
will prove to be only a counterfeit.
Your civilization will commit suicide
with its own sword.
For, remember a nest built on a fragile
bough can never endure.¹⁹

His renunciation of territorial nationalism, it appears, was guided more by emotionalism than intellectualism. Better it could have been that learning intensively from the shortcomings of European nationalism he would have tried to evolve a philosophy of nationalism on scientific lines free from these encumbrances. For Indians nationalism was an instrument not for imperialist or colonial exploitation but of liberation from alien domination to bring to an end their disgraceful position. For that matter Iqbal failed to enunciate a formula. Is it not true that like Iqbal if other leaders, poets, thinkers and philosophers could have never moved to active political struggle against the injustice inflicted by the foreign power and confined themselves merely to pointing out the shortcomings of Western nationalism, India as well as the other parts of Asia—perhaps would have never achieved freedom. Moreover, his intellectual insight displayed the dismal failure to locate a significant phenomenon in Europe. Very much in front of his eyes there were speedily gaining ground the forces of socialism, which were endeavouring to establish a higher form of society all over the world than that of bourgeois nationalism of the West.

Confronted with the dilemma born out of the new situation he made a retreat and started believing in Pan-Islamism. It was another attempt to check progress of national history on rational lines—an endeavour as catastrophic and fatal as the endeavour to revive the Hindu nationalism made by the Hindu nationalist leaders of the Congress and Hindu renaissance. Iqbal, however, believed that only Islam, in its ancient purity, evolved a social system by practising which a particular individual could fulfil all his keen desires and make use of his potentialities. An elucidation of his point of view

19. *Kulliyat-i-Iqbal* (Lucknow, Maktab-i-Adab, 1953), p. 118.

is found in his article on "Muslim Democracy" written in the *NEW ERA* as late as 1916. Eulogizing the superiority of the adherents of Islam over the people of the world he wrote in his *Shikwa*:

Which among these nations raised
The sacred sword in holy fight,
Self-consecrated to Thy cause,
To set their crazy World alright?
This we and we alone who thronged
As warriors on Thy fields of fray ..
To glorify Thy name we died,
Adorned with hallowed battle scars.
Not lust for power for our own sake,
Our drawn-sword's playfulness inspired
Nor roamed we hand-in-glove with Death
For Worldly riches we desired.²⁰

In another passage of *Shikwah* he tried to display the superiority of Muslim culture over that of the Hindus. He wrote:

O God! Prior to our existence,
Thy world had been an undesirable abode...
Where prostration was meant for stones
and where tree was considered as God
Thou knowest fully well that none used
to remember thee and recite thy name
But the mighty hands of the Muslims did the needful.
Established Thy prayers and glorified Thy name.
We only enthroned the trace of one God in all
human hearts.
Whose voice frightened the idol worshippers?

20. The Poet further continued:

Declare thou whose fierce value once
Did Khyber's barriers overthrow?
or whose resistless might once laid
Framed Caesar's proud cities low?
Who smashed to dust man's hand-wrought
Those things of straw and earth gods and clay.

[Altaf Husain, *The Complaint and the Answer: An English version of Iqbal's Shikwah and Jawab-i-Shikwah* (Lahore: 1943), paras V, VI, VII & IX.

It is we who uprooted Thy disbelievers
from Thy earth and cleaned it.²¹

His communal bent of mind again reflected in his another writing "*Muslims*" where he declared his first and foremost adherence to Islam. He believed in one God (whereas others did in thousands). This truth was with him since his birth. God created him to safeguard His truth. "If we die, humanity dies" was the conclusion of the writing.²² In his "*Payam-i-Mashriq*" Iqbal became more clear when he wrote that though he was born in India he got the light of his eye from the sacred dust of Bukhara, Kabul and Tabriz. It remanifested his anti-nationalist spirit.

The adherence to Pan-Islamism popularized the slogan of "back to Arabia". Its popular interpretation in the imagination of the Hindu masses could only be the adoption of the civilization of a country, where hardly a decade or so back i.e. even after nearly 30 years when Iqbal pronounced his views in favour of Pan-Islamism, the elementary knowledge of modern technique and science was meagre or equal to nil; where, according to a popular rumour, on seeing a new model of American car for the first time, to speed it the people placed fodder before it instead of petroleum. The slogan of "Back to Arabia" was as reactionary and harmful for national progress as that of "Back to Vedas". There might have been attained some temporary gains by raising the slogan, but in its ultimate phase the slogan became obstructive to the intensive growth of the struggle for emancipation. It divided the forces fighting against a common adversary.

Besides this, there was a strong psychological reason behind the illusion which directed Muslim *litterateurs* like Iqbal into thinking that by working for Pan-Islamism they were returning to the antiquity full of glory and glamour while, in deed, they were perhaps unconsciously creating a new socio-political set-up not known to history. Iqbal and his followers imagined that they were engaged in an endeavour to re-

21. *Hindustan Times* (New Delhi), 25 December 1959, p. 6, col. 5.

22. *Ibid.*

produce Pan-Islamism of the ancient God's Age. But in practice, they were unconsciously an instrument in carving out a separate state out of the Indian sub-continent for their fellow Muslims, which itself was an anti-thesis of universal human brotherhood pronounced many times by them,

This biased approach of Iqbal provided ample scope for communalism, sectarianism and religious fanaticism in the political life of the country. The metaphysics of Pan-Islamism moulded the mental outlook in such a way that quite a significant number of Muslims, if not all, looked for political aspiration towards the Muslim regions of West Asia rather than India with whose majority-holding people the Muslims had lived more or less in a spirit of co-existence since the beginning of Muslim rule in India in the twelfth century.

Emphasis on this philosophy of Pan-Islamism led to the growth of a peculiar dictum that the Indian Mussalman is first a Muslim and then an Indian. This dictum carried a very harmful meaning behind it. All that it meant was that Muslim's religious associations and obligations should have full precedence over his political associations and obligations. In other words, his allegiance to non-Muslim state of which he might have been a subject or citizen, must give way to his allegiance to the Muslim people and princes of the world, when these two came into conflict with each other. This was the necessary conclusion of the political Pan-Islamism. And as such it hindered the framing of even a federal constitution for the country.

Moreover, judged strictly from the literary angle a poetry is everlasting, precisely to the point when it is not dogmatic and stereotype and attract everybody by the logic of appeal to the human element incorporated in it. All his verse can be appreciated and utilized by some; it may even enthuse a few; it may also serve a temporary requirement. The tragedy is that Iqbal who might have written for universal mankind and might have made appreciable contribution to literature, permitted himself to produce a vast quantity of poetry to serve the purpose of dogma and propaganda. And thus we witness a strange phenomenon of Iqbal of "*Sare Jehan Se Achchha Hindostan Hamara*" drifting into the Iqbal of "*Chino Arab hamara, Hindostan hamara, Muslim hain ham-*

vatan, hai Sara Jahan hamara." He became essentially an Islamic poet, and his interests were purely non-Indian.

However, as pointed out earlier, Urdu literature was not completely lacking in nationalistic sentiments and patriotic aspirations. The growth of militant nationalism, the popularization of bourgeois-nationalist movements and above all, the growth of the new Muslim intelligentsia on the eve of the World War I and the clash of its aspirations and interests with those of the British bureaucracy, led to the growth of anti-alien feelings. They ultimately found their expression in the Khilafat Movement and their merger with those of the Hindu nationalist and patriotic *litterateurs*.

The patriotic trends invoked by Ghalib in the later half of the 19th century and the national aspirations aroused by the appealing poetry of Iqbal, especially by his well-known song "*Sare Jahan se Achchha Hindostan Hamara*" in the early years of the 20th century, were readily picked up by Urdu *litterateurs* like Chakbast, Allahabadi and others.

Brij Narain 'Chakbast' was recognized one of the major Urdu poets in the first quarter of this century. The collected edition of his poems *Subeh-i-Watan* was received with general acclamation. Despite sharing the general defects of the Lucknow school, he introduced an innovation in his nationalistic and patriotic poems. On the philosophy of patriotism 'Chakbast' wrote with great fervour:

Happy be thou nightingale blessed with thy rose,
Happy be thou rose blessed with thy garden,
And let my helpless spirit wander
In the dearest vale of my Motherland.²³

'Chakbast' discovered his own nation anew and sang about it with zeal:

Dagh deta hai magar jab koi dil soze watan
Iske sada se larzta hai ye aiwana kuhan;

23. Cited by Amar Nath Jha, *Urdu Poets and Poetry* (Patna, 1955), p. 113.

*Chandni raat men jis waqt hawa aati hai,
Kaum ke dil ke dharkane ki sada aati hai.*²⁴

In fact he composed poems after poems in this connection. While in some of them he exhorted his countrymen to use the ashes of national martyrs as collyrium, in others he moved the people by lamenting over their death. In his allegory on Tilak he compared his death as the loss of entire armoury from the nationalists' stronghold. Universal sorrow consequent on his demise was expressed in his saying that even the breeze blowing in the valley ceased to move, the light of the stars dwindled for hours and, the flowing rivers came to still.²⁵ Such invigorating themes roused the people to work for the ends for which the deceased had aspired and devoted his life.

In consequence of the patriotic writings in Indian literature there began to grow a national consciousness in the people. Like the writings of Byron they inculcated a sense of pride and chivalry in their outlook. The traditional representation of nationalism is that of a slender little David confronting the strong force of a Goliath and defeating him. And the role of this little David appears to have been successfully played by the people when on attaining political consciousness they were actively engaging themselves to the eradication of British colonialists. By moving into action they were promoting the cause of national liberation. Expressing this new awakening Bharati wrote in mystic style:

Ring all the temple bells. For India is born again.
Her new name is the one that she had long long ago --
the Bharata land. Great is her thirst for new things....
The re-born mother has begun to speak, to sing and
to dance... Her play is the working of miracles. Her
speech and her song send a thrill of joy into the core
of the world.... Those old songs of sacrifice and
immortality--she reads them greedily once again...
makes feasts and festivals, The mother is gaining
secular knowledge. She is learning arts, sciences,

24. Ibid, p. 114.

25. Ibid, p. 113.



trades.... Proclaim universal joy. For the Mother has realised her destiny.²⁶

Revivalism

The spirit of revivalism introduced in the social organism by the leaders of renaissance was bound to reflect in the sphere of literature. Thus the "act of worship at alien shrines" at some places coincided and in others was followed with a revival of the ancient glories. The newly insurging cultural nationalism which firmly gripped the mental attitudes of the politically conscious middle class intelligentsia was also seen in literature. Once more the *litterateurs* engaged themselves seriously in rediscovering and reviving the infallibility of the classics like *Vedas* and the *Upanishads*, and the literary giants like Kalidas and Panini. And the process gained stimulus from the translations of ancient Indian literary creations like *Ramayana*, *Mahabhart*a and *Shakuntla* by European scholars like Max Muller, Rider and Keith. This revival of the glories of antiquity undoubtedly served as means to knit the indigenous people, regardless of caste, creed and sex, into a single component and made them aware of their common heritage. The revival of folk-lore played a pioneering role in inspiring the patriotic ballads, lyrics and songs whose rythms speedily gained popularity.

The revivalism in literature harked the people back to Vedic culture, to simple living and high thinking, and to transforming each individual's life into a sacrifice in the service of the Motherland and of humanity as enunciated and propounded in the *Bhagrad Gita*. The emphasis on these great ideals played a remarkable role in shaping the form, content and action of all the political movements launched to liberate the country from alien domination. It also intensified the hatred of imperialism. Revolutionary passions were aroused by emphasizing the cult of the sword demanding blood and revenge - a dedication of the whole life on the altar of *shakti* indentifying Mother India. There were produced satirical caricatures describing the perpetual dichotomy of the Ruler and the Ruled. These were drawn and

26. A Mahadevan, *Subramania Bahrati* (Madras, 1957), Appendix 1, p. 91.

sung in the popular tunes of folk songs and ballads. The rallying cry of the Tamilnadu Saint Appar: "We are slaves of none; we fear no death", was revived in literature and recited from the public pulpits in order to challenge the force and power of the British regime. Old episodes and tales relating to the lives of great personalities of India like Buddha, Rama, Krishna and others were narrated in the modern style emphasizing the ideal of freedom and patriotism. In order to arouse the people to a sense of self-respect a severe and persistent attack was launched upon the tendency of blind admiration of the Western civilization and culture.

The revivalism took gigantic strides in Bengali literature in the years following the national upsurge of 1857. It found its expression in 1858 in the epic and narrative poem *Padmini Upakhyan* (Tale of Padmini). The poet Ranga Lal Bandyopadhyay exhorted his countrymen vigorously but indirectly through the speech of his hero Bhim Singh, addressed to the *Kshatriyas* of Chittore:

*Swadhinata – hinatya ke banchite chay re ke banchite
chay? Dasatva srinkhal balo ke paribe pay he ke paribe
pay?*²⁷

(Who is there willing to live without freedom, willing to live like that? Who wants to wear the fetters, ah; wear the fetters?)

Patriotism was also seen in the resort of the Bengali poets to Todd's *Annals of Rajasthan*, the history of the Rajputs and their glorious patriotic defence against the invading Moghuls and Tartars. The study of this book supplied heroic themes. Rabindra Nath Tagore, in his 17th year then, started writing in the columns of *Bharati* in open praise of the national heroes of 1857 struggle and admired particularly the Rani of Jhansi, Tantya Tope and old Kunwar Singh for their heroic courage and patriotism. Tagore, however, was not a sectarian revivalist because of his family tradition. He wrote narrative poems of heroic incidents taking place in Indian history. He also picked up the chivalrous deeds of the Rajput, Sikh and Maha-

27. R.L. Bandyopadhyaya, passage translated into English by D. Sen, *Padmini Upakhyan* (Calcutta, 1858 ed.), p. 231.

rashtira warriors and incidents from the religious history of India as themes of his writings. Incidents occurring in the early history of Buddhism, of the time of the *Upanishads* and of early Sikhism appeared in these pieces. Among them the best are related to the life of Upagupta, the Buddhist monk, Bikshuni Supriya, Sudas, etc. The narration of these stories awakened in the people an emotion of pride in the past, a sense of self-respect and courageous aspiration for the future.

The spirit of Hindu revivalism was also there in the writings of Indo-Anglican writers like Aru Dutt and Tooru Dutt whose *Ancient Ballads and Legends of Hindustan* appeared posthumously in 1882. In his poem "To the Awakened India", Swami Vivekananda, one of the greatest leaders of renaissance, also exhorted his country to pick up the path of progress:

Once more awake!
 For sleep it was, not death, to bring thee life anew....
 Resume thy march....
 Strong and steady,
 Blissful, bold and free, Awakener ever
 Forward! Speak thy stirring words
 Thy home is gone
 Where loving hearts had brought thee up. .
 Then start afresh
 From the land of thy birth.²⁸

No less representative contribution in inculcating a patriotic spirit among the Gujarati people was made by Kanhaiyalal Maniklal Munshi. By his semi-political novels, historical romances he tried to raise new hopes and aspirations in the people. Traditional values came to be looked upon with reverence and sympathy. The ancient fascination awakened a feeling of national dignity and goal. Probably he appeared to be at his best in his famous trilogy on the Chalukya Rajputs of Gujarat, *Patanjal Prabhuta*, *Gujaratno Natha* and *Rajadhiraja*. In these writings are referred the young warriors with a resolute spirit of sacrifice and devotion, the young Rajput wives sending their romantic husbands to battle-fields by cheerfully performing the *sati* ceremony; the parents feeling

28. *Speeches and writings of Swami Vivekananda* (Madras, Natesan & Co., seventh ed.), p. 776.

jubilant on the heroic death of their sons in the battle. The noble deeds of the ministers and statesmen, whether Vanika and Jain or Brahmin and Shaiv leading armies to the battlefield, were glorified. In his mythological eulogies like *Verani Basulata* which strikes a similarity with *Anand Math*, the author's hero sees the future vision of the nation where India is independent, politically united and economically prosperous; where the intelligentsia is assigned to play a definite role in the task of national reconstruction. Through his novels Munshi also endeavoured to inculcate the spirit of single-mindedness and a capacity for united action to eliminate the foreign control. He also called upon them in an allegorical style to remain vigilant and attempt perpetually to obtain freedom.

During his stay in England Savarkar also wrote in Marathi his famous work, *The First Indian War of Independence* of 1857. But the book was proscribed before it could be published in Marathi in any Indian press. The revolutionary group active in Europe, however, managed its printing in Holland in 1909 and despatched its copies wrapped in specially printed covers bearing artificial titles such as "Pick Wick Papers" and "Scott's Works", to India, America and Japan. In all these places the book was sold at a fabulous price reaching on certain occasions to Rs. 300 a copy. People in England distributed its copies among their friends as a rare or significant gift. Moulana Mohamed Ali obtained it on loan from Sir Charles Cleveland. The book was read with great interest all over the world. Encompassed in this book was the fire, fury and frenzy of fighting age. The spirit of fierce reaction left in the minds of the people by the defeat in 1857 stands perhaps nowhere frankly revealed than in his version of the Kanpur massacre with the prayer that "Mother Ganges who drank that day the blood of Europeans, may drink her fill of it again."²⁹ The main aim of the author was to inspire his people with a strong desire to rise again and wage a second successful war for the freedom of the nation. For that objective, he always stressed the necessity for carrying politics and patriotism into the military forces of India.

29. V.D. Savarkar, *The Indian War of Independence, 1857* (Bombay, Phoenix Publications, 1947 ed.), p. XXIII. See also B.N. Agrawala, *Viplav yagya ki Aahutiyan* (Mirzapore, 1970), pp. 174-75.

Effects of the writing were visible in 1914. The leaders of the Ghadr Party who had launched the Komagatamaru upsurge had read the book with a religious zeal and had drawn great inspiration from the work. More tremendously did it influence the struggle of Independence under the lead of Netaji Subhas Bose in 1943. Very soon the book became the *Bhagavad Gita* to the members of the clandestine revolutionary societies at home. Sardar Bhagat Singh and later on Subhas Bose secretly managed its publication in India for popularizing the cause of national independence. It was also published in the German language by the Friends of India Society in Germany.

The nationalistic trend also found its reflection in Marathi literature in the form of *powdas*. They were composed to inspire the people. Govindaraja wrote one on *Panipat*. But the most powerful *powdas* which left an everlasting impression upon the mind of the people, were like *Baji Prabhu* and *Tanaji* composed by V.D. Savarkar. In them is reflected his intense ardour for freedom. Both the ballads were so much full of patriotic spirit and they stirred the readers so much that they were proscribed. Despite the repression they attained the popularity of folk songs in Marathi-speaking region. They became the pet verses of even a street-walker or layman. The composer's name became known all over the country. His lyric of patriotism, inspiring songs of heroes, ballads and hymns "thrilled Clubs and Kitchens, Schools and Choruses and meetings and he was hailed as a bard of Freedom or a rebel poet."³⁰

The plays produced in the Marathi literature also turned out to be really powerful moulders of public opinion. This instrument was widely utilized by prolific play-writers like K. P. Khadilkar (1872-1948) who had already become popular for his militant political writings. His intelligence and mental make-up was well-fitted to imbibe the heroic grandeur and idealism of the tragic plays like *Vikar-Vilasit* written and staged earlier. But more than this, he had imbibed a remarkable capacity of utilizing "epic stories and events to symbolize a modern socio-political development. His *Keechak-Wadh* (1910) allegorically reflected the bitter experience of the people due

30. Dhnanjay Keer, *Veer Savarkar* (Bombay, Popular Prakashan, 1966, sec. ed.), p. 21.

to the Partition of Bengal in the days of Lord Curzon's regime. The main motive of the author appeared to give exact idea of the prevailing political discontent of the people under a foreign rule. In this political allegory Tilak and Curzon were displayed as Bheema and Keechak respectively. The very first performance of the play on the stage had such a tremendous impact upon people's mind that the British Government stopped its staging in future. The play itself was prescribed and most of its copies were confiscated. His another play *Babubandki* called upon the people to eradicate the internal schism. By using the story of the Peshwas he tried to symbolize the internal division and disunity prevalent in the contemporary social set-up. With these powerful writings he dominated the stage for a very long period.

There was also S.M. Paranjpe who contributed spirited political writings in Marathi language. Most of his writings appeared in the daily *Kal* whose Chief Editor he was. All the emphasis laid down in these essays was directed towards the development of political consciousness in the people. The descriptions in his writings related to the epic age were so allegorical that they were equally applicable to the contemporary conditions. His scathing sarcasm and scissor-like wit which were mainly directed against the British imperialists, stirred the people.

There also appeared biographical writings in prose in the Marathi literature with a view of educating the people in the philosophy of nationalism. The patriotic sketches of Indian and Italian heroes gave a great fillip to the development of political thought and interest in the freedom movements elsewhere. Besides his famous writings like the *History of Ireland* and *French Revolution*, N.C. Kelkar wrote *Garibaldi*, a biography of the famous Italian national hero. It became an illustrious example of the life of a political hero.

During his stay in London, V.D. Savarkar also translated the autobiography of Mazzini in Marathi. It was so greatly liked that leading papers and leading men in Maharashtra extolled it highly and it was taken out in processions by the devotees. The book was mostly liked for the introduction. The fiery propaganda and the strong patriotism of this introduction captivated the minds of the people so much that though

it was proscribed by the Government, patriotic youths learnt it by heart and repeated the twentyfive pages of its inspiring introduction word by word. This book became the Nationalist Text Book. It remained proscribed for forty years and the ban was lifted only on the formation of the Congress Ministries in 1946.

Like the Marathi *litterateurs* Bharati in Tamilnadu felt inspired to display the national struggle in an epic setting, but rendering a contemporary, almost topical appeal. In 1912 he published his poem *Paanchalli Sabadam* related to the life of Draupdi. The choice of this central episode of the *Mahabharata* was put in an allegorical form. The whole theme was reoriented to conform to the demands of the age. Draupadi was represented as "Mother India" in her tribulations and sufferings; agonies and anguishes. Durayodana, Shakuni and Dussasan were portrayed as forces of exploitation and evil. They represented political power in its crudest form. Bhishma was characterized as the spokesman of Moderates.

In Hindi literature the same phenomenon was reflected in the famous work of Bhartendu Harish Chandra *Hindi, Hindu Hindustan*. Reformist in outlook and petty-bourgeois in origin Hindi writers like Pratap Narayan Mishra, Bala Krishna Bhatt and Premghan pleaded that due reverence be paid to traditional values. Their poems vibrated with devotional and mystical sentiments remnants of feudal society. Prem Chand also revived the antiquity. But the best and most inspiring contribution was made by Maithili Sharan Gupta when he composed *Bharat-Bharati* in 1902. In spite of some exaggeration of antiquity its contents were close to reality.

The phenomenon of revivalism in Urdu literature also led to religious revivalism and the glorification of the past. But before this could start Urdu literature had to discard the stultifying court traditions of the "rose-and-the-nightingale school of gorgeous vocabulary", "tawdry diction" and "stagnant imagination".³¹ The change came after 1857 when the British consolidated their rule in India.

31. Comments by K.A. Faruqi, "Urdu Literature", *Contemporary Indian Literature* (New Delhi, Sahitya Akademy, 1957), p. 265.

The trend of revivalism was characterized by a nostalgic admiration of the past glories of the Muslim India and the Muslim world, though it was filled with passion for social reform, a spirit of rational enquiry and search for new values. Revivalism found its forceful exponent in Hali. His famous poem "The Flow and Ebb of Islam", popularly known as "Musaddas-i-Hali", is a remarkable description of the past glories of the Muslims as well as an exhortation for their reawakening. Hali's motto throughout his career was: "We must change with the time". He believed that literature was not for the sake of literature but its significance lay in serving and reflecting people's life. The practice of Hali was adopted and pursued by other eminent Urdu writers like Azad, Nazir and Sharar.

An attack against blind imitation of the Western mode of behaviour was also visible in the extempore composition of poems by Akbar Allahabadi. His satiric and humourous verses made Syed Ahmed Khan, the Aligarh Movement and the modern system of education the obvious butts for his sarcastic remarks.³² His poems are brilliant comments on different phases of the socio-political life of India.

As a result of this revivalism manifesting in both Hindu and Muslim bourgeois and petty-bourgeois writers the idea of achieving a unified independent secular state suffered a great set-back after the struggle of national resistance of 1858. Almost all the important writers, in almost all the Indian languages, started reviewing the achievements of their forefathers with a spirit of nostalgia. And this narrow communal outlook prevented their precious writings from becoming an integral part of the national heritage. Thus the then manifesting national spirit was unfortunately shrouded in the communal mode of thinking. Misguided in this way as well as by the shrewd pursuance of 'divide et impera' policy of the British regime, Hindu poets and writers exhorted the indigenous people for Hindi-Hindu-Hindustan, while the Muslim

32. Thus he became the ideal of religious conservatives who used him as a stick to beat the liberals. No less were the liberals amused when he pooh-poohed the Muslim League for its conservatism in politics.

poets and writers started, indirectly or directly, for the carving out of a new separate state out of the Indian peninsula. In this connection one thing merits consideration. While reviewing modern literature one must not, therefore, lose sight of the duality that it possessed—a duality that manifested progress and reaction, hope and despondency, fear and courage, loyalty to the colonial rulers and protest against its ways and techniques.

CULTURAL PROGRESS

B — Education

When we established this college and left other occupations, other chances of life, to devote our lives to this institution, we did so because we hoped to see in it the foundation, the nucleus of a nation of the new India which is to begin its career after this night of sorrow and trouble.. What we want here is not merely to open to you careers for earning a livelihood, but to build up sons for the motherland, to work and to suffer for her— There are times in a nation's history when Providence places before it one work, one aim, to which everything else however high and noble in itself, has to be sacrificed. Such a time has now arrived for our motherland when nothing is dearer than her service, when everything else is to be directed to that end If you will study, study for her sake; train yourself body and mind and soul for her service—Work that she may prosper. Suffer that she may rejoice.

[Speech by Aurobindo at the inauguration of National College, Calcutta; Speeches of Aurobindo Ghose (Calcutta, Arya Publishing House, 1948), pp. 3-5.]

New System

Unlike the educational system in India before the advent of British rule, which was controlled and monopolized by the upper classes in social gradation (like the Brahmins, and

Moulvis and Mullahs) modern education was open to all (of course, those who could afford it) irrespective of caste or creed. In the beginning of the 19th century 800 millions of Indian people were nearly as widely separated in thought, religion and civilization from the many millions of Europeans as they had been in the days of Alexander or Ashoka. East and West had been held apart by an unbroken formidable mountain range. Modern education represented the first inter-penetration of the two distinctive civilizations and cultures. The acquisition of modern education through the medium of English assisted the people to a great extent in acquainting themselves with the secrets of the Western world. It also provided them an opportunity to understand their own country as a single unified entity. This innovation not only helped the Indian nationalists to launch a struggle for acquiring the freedom of unobstructed study and knowledge of modern Western thought, it also provided Indians, for the first time, an opportunity of communicating with and establishing brotherly ties with their own country men, no matter to what caste or religion they belonged. This development gradually led to the minimization of differences and generated, though slowly, a feeling of national consolidation and modernized outlook.

Some British teachers and professors wittingly or unwittingly inspired their Indian students with ideas of freedom and nationalism. Imbibing the bourgeois democratic contents of Western literature and culture, Indians were inspired to struggle against the political, economic and social degradation of the country, which had enslaved the individual and hampered the independent growth of initiative. They also started thinking in terms of an independent national existence of their own on democratic, secular and liberal principles. The change in outlook assisted them in freeing their minds from the retrogressive hold of fatalism, passivism, renunciation. The acquisition of worldly knowledge through the medium of English strengthened the forces working for national regeneration. The growth of this new consciousness was highlighted in a picturesque manner by M. Shyama Shanker, a member of the State Council in Jhalavad (a princely state in Rajputana in the pre-independence phase) in a London gathering in November 1915:

Let the manifold blessings that English education has conferred on India be written in letters of gold, and preserved in the shrines of grateful Indian hearts, for all ages to come. It is English education that has arrested the course of degeneracy in India. It is English education that has awakened her from her slumber under fast-gathering ignorance and inertia. She (India) is knowing herself, knowing her now glorious past and the grand destiny that awaits her in the future....¹

This section of society worked hard for the dissemination of Western languages, literature and scientific and technical knowledge for they were the essentials in the task of national reconstruction. So the introduction of modern education was a momentous factor in Indian life.

Movement against Modern Education

But the system of modern education displayed tendencies contradicting one another. While on the one hand it helped the petty-bourgeois classes to become conscious of their existence as a nation, simultaneously the quality of output from the educational institutions diminished as it increased in quantity. It came to be regarded by the Indian public more and more as merely an avenue to lucrative careers or dignified security of appointment, however low and modest, in the Government services. In the absence of curriculum for technical education soon the educational institutions began to put out more than what was required for Government services or other public professions. "We turn out B.A's and M.A's by the thousand", alleged C. R. Das, "from the university mills just as buttons and pin-heads may be turned out in English factories."² There prevailed a general impression that they did not build up the real and moral man needed for national reconstruction. They did not develop the latent self-consciousness and self-respect of the people. They made them conceited, ignorant of the interests of their self, "purblind" and

1. Shyama Shankar, *The Problem of Education in India* (London, 1915), p. 7.
2. *Chitta Ranjan Dass; Being a collection of speeches* (Calcutta, 1928), pp. 57-8.

"slaves to an idol of false knowledge"³ and false imitation. This was a sheer waste of money and energy. "Oh! our education! Is it not tragic," commented Lala Lajpat Rai on the uselessness of the system, "that we should at once feel that in the battle of life we might have done better without it."⁴

In the absence of their being absorbed in services the young graduates continued to swell the ranks of unemployed. These unfortunate unemployed youths were left "hopelessly stranded on the road", equally unfit for humbler spheres of life which they had learnt to dislike and for the higher positions to which they had uselessly aspired. Comfortably persuaded to impute it solely to the alien regime liable for a system which had led them merely into a wrong direction and transformed them into a people good for nothing they joined the rank and file of a proletariat that could only by courtesy be called intellectual, but was just the material out of which every kind of dissatisfaction is apt to "breed desperadoes."⁵

The prevailing situation convinced a large number of unemployed youths that unless alien rule was removed they had no chance of improving their lot. Hence a significant number of them joined the rank and file of the national forces struggling constitutionally for the removal of British rule in India. Many of them turned into ardent political revolutionaries by joining clandestine violent societies. To arouse the feelings of patriotism and antagonism against alien control weeklies like *Jugantar* openly advocated that young Indians must be inspired by such an ideal as would present to them a picture of everlasting solution.

Secondly, by their revolutionary activities these victims of the educational system also wanted to repudiate a charge often laid against them that they were good for nothing. To fulfil their aspirations of having their own rule in their country they displayed that they were capable of sacrificing their

3. Ibid.

4. Lajpat Rai, *The Evolution of Japan and other Papers* (London, 1906), p. 80.

5. Valentine Chirol, *India Old and New* (London, Macmillans, 1921), p. 120.

lives for patriotic and national ideals. Valentine Chirol admitted :

The havoc terrorism wrought amongst the youth of India for several years after the explosion of the first murderous bombs at Muzzafarpur in 1908 is still part of living history of India.⁶

The introduction of modern education also led to the growth of some unhealthy tendencies among the young educated classes. Through its medium the youth came for the first time in contact with Western culture, whose materialistic growth under the capitalist economy and technological advance appealed to their imagination. They were stirred and swept off their feet by its showy tendencies. Speedily they started imitating it in toto. They started living as the British people in India lived. English manners and customs became their ideal. In fact, they felt proud in the blind imitation of the alien civilization and culture. They looked down upon their own Indian civilization, thought poorly of their own society and laughed at their own cultural values. They sneered at the ignorance of those who had not acquired English education, and such people they contemptuously called illiterate and uneducated. Thus they formed in themselves a class of persons who were Indians in race and colour but English in tastes, opinions, morals and intellect. Caricaturing this new product of education Lala Lajpat Rai wrote :

He took his dress, he took his cheroot and pipe, and also his cup and beefsteak. He began to live in houses built and furnished in the English way. He detested Indian life and took pride in being Anglicised. Every thing Indian was odious in his eyes. The Indians were barbarians, their religion was a bundle of superstitions; they were dirty people; their customs and manners were uncivilized; they were a set of narrow-minded bigots who did not know that man was born free. So the English set the fashion for them in every thing. If their English Masters went to Church and read the Bible, they did the same....They knew noth-

6. Valentine Chirol, *India* (London, Earnest Benn Ltd., 1930, Fourth impression), p. 123.

ing of their own past history, and they glorified in being "Sahib".⁷

Besides, they considered themselves advanced in knowledge only if they remembered orally the entire pedigree of the British monarchs or the Bourbons in France. But they were quite ignorant about their ancestors in their own family.

This unintelligent imitation of Western culture was strongly opposed and criticized by the older generation. This sort of patriotism was alleged to be based on denationalized ideas. There was no touch with the outlook of the local people. The educational system was mainly motivated with the object of making Indian boys and girls *Kristans* or irreligious and demoralizing them by exhausting their mental faculties. They were branded "Anglo-manias" or "educated philistines". They sacrificed aesthetic culture in their glamour of a glittering prosperity and their nature was seeking to transform itself into the insular one of "John Bull".

The transformation of the intelligentsia came to be so characterized not only by the educational experts and social reformers but also by novelists and poets in a satirical manner. It became a regular theme in their writings. A regular campaign also came to be organized against this section of the educated people by the political leaders in their annual conferences and public gatherings. They strongly criticised and protested against it. During the course of his presidential address delivered at the Bengal provincial conference held in 1917 C.R. Das commented :

It (modern education) is powerless to enrich the life-blood of our soul.. Mimic Anglicism has become an obsession with us; we find its black foot print in every walk and endeavour of our life....We have become hybrid in dress, in thought, in sentiment and culture and are making frantic attempts even to be hybrids in blood....But we must beware even now and listen to the wise warning of Bankim:

A new trouble has arisen in our land. With English

7. Lajpat Rai, *Young India* (New York, 1916), pp. 110-13.

culture and English civilization, we have become deeply enamoured of material prosperity. The Englishmen loves the outer splendours of life; this is the chief mark of his civilization; here in India this is chief evil of our life. From the Indus to the Brahmaputra we have dislodged our ancient gods from their ancient tabernacles and have set up the image of this one God alone. The copper-bearded Englishman is the priest of this new worship and its sacred texts have to be recited from Mill and Adam Smith. In this worship of money, the English newspapers are drums and trumpets, the vernacular journals are clinking symbols. Industry and training are the thank offerings at this workshop; the sacrifice is the heart and its fruit is eternal damnation. Then let us worship this great god of material prosperity....Let us offer ancient culture as burnt offering before this new god of wealth.⁸

Drawing an analogy of this educational phenomenon with the famous ancient Shirin-Farhad romantic episode Iqbal wrote the following verse:

We are happy at the progress of young man,
 But the joy is accompanied by a sorrowful cry,
 We thought education would bring prosperity,
 Though we were unaware it would also bring atheism
 Shirin did adore the abode of Parvez,
 But she has also brought in Farhad's axe.⁹

Such unhealthy development was responsible for creating social differences between the intellectuals and masses isolating the former from the real problems concerned with the growth of the nation. To an unimaginable extent it had led the young intellectuals to idealize and glorify British rule. The whole trouble lay in the fact that these young Indians had lost their link with their country. Their inner conscience reflected a taste for the suburban life in *Englishtan* which they endeavoured to import into their own life. This

8. *Chitta Ranjan Dass*, n. 2, pp. 46-8.

9. *Kuliyat-i-Iqbal* (Lahore, 1945), p. 171.

identification with the alien ruling power and anti-Indianism could never promote national consciousness in the new generation. It could only generate a humiliating mentality of slavery. A consciousness to challenge the validity of the authority and power of the alien rulers was bound to be conspicuous by its absence.

Thus the elder generation continued to allege that the newly educated Indians were destroying their own culture and civilization. And this corruption of Indian art, music and drama was doing more serious harm to the people than any political or economic aggression from without.

Above all, the elder generation grieved over and bitterly complained that the introduction of modern education had deprived Indians of maintaining contact with the national classical achievements in ancient days by their forefathers in various sphere of the life. The heritage bequeathed by their ancestors in Sanskrit, Arabic, Persian and other regional languages was laid asunder as a result of the preference given to Western things in the new system of education. Instead of devoting their time to the studies of classical poets, writers and philosophers like Kalidasa, Panini, Manu, Gautama, Shankracharya and others the new generation was engaged in studying compulsorily the works of Western scholars who themselves had learnt a lot from the orient. It learnt by rote all the polished phrases and scriptures of Western politics. And in this way it boasted of the up-to-dateness of its education. Deprived of its national heritage and partial acquisition of the Western knowledge due to the obvious human limitations, the new generation had turned out to be a hotch-potch one. It was neither oriental nor occidental. Reporting this kind of criticism made by the revivalists Lala Lajpat Rai put it in the following way:

The thoughtful among the Indians, who had not taken to English manners, were anxiously watching the flow of the current. They saw that disintegrating and denationalising forces that were at work; they saw that their national edifice was crumbling down brick by brick; every thing which they had valued and held sacred was being devastated and treated with contempt and reduced to ashes. Their own children were

deserting the old banners to which innumerable generations before them had clung with love and reverence. They saw all this; they were sorry; they wept tears of blood.¹⁰

Although such criticisms about the educated young men contained some element of truth, nevertheless the fact remains that in European countries the bourgeois intellectuals (Bacon, Hobbes, Locke, Shakespeare, Wordsworth, Milton, in England and Holbach, Helvetious, Rousseau, Voltaire, and others in France) did evolve anti-religious, anti-idealist and materialist dictums (though suffering from mixing-up the elements of idealism). These philosophies had constituted a permanent and integral part of modern Western culture that paved the way for the advancement of humanity. Moreover, on the basis of the accumulated knowledge of the natural world through both historical research as well as the generalization of the practice of class struggle in the then bourgeois society, Karl Marx and Engels, outstanding ideological leaders of "have-nots", enriched, deepened and gave a scientific shape to the materialist philosophy evolved by their bourgeois predecessors. The critics of the Western system of education forgot that if some of the young intellectuals blindly imitated the bourgeois materialistic habits of the West there were other serious students who, by studying the Western-bourgeois as well as anti-bourgeois philosophers, were enriching themselves with a scientific knowledge. And it was certainly a step of advancement for the Indian social organism which was still burdened with old stereotype feudal caste-ridden concepts evolved by Hindu preachers like Shankaracharya or an escapist philosophy indoctrinated by teachers like Buddha. It is a tragedy of immense magnitude that the phenomenon of national slavery under a European Power instigated patriotic Indian intellectuals to idealize the backward culture of the country's feudal antiquity and made it disorient from the historically better modern bourgeois culture of the West.

Reverting to the subject of study, quite a large number of people in the country who had anything to do with education

10. Lajpat Rai, n. 7, pp. 13-4.

in India were of opinion that it laid too great stress on the literary side and did not fit people for the development of life. It encouraged "claim" at the cost of the real merit; it produced a class of imitators and left little scope for originality; it introduced a foreign standard of judgment. It was destined not to produce statesmen, patriots or scholars but only clerks. Moreover, it invited third class men from England to fill the highest positions in the educational service of the country and placed the best Indian talent under them to lead a useless existence for want of opportunities. What they (Indians) wanted most and cared for most was that education should be more national and human. It should no longer represent a distorted picture of India in order to destroy the growth of the symptoms of national consciousness.

Clash between Lord Curzon and Intelligentsia

Besides these shortcomings in the educational system it was the Viceroyalty of Lord Curzon which added insult to injury by irritating and antagonizing the educated beyond reconciliation. His outspokenness and satirical style drew powerful protests from them against him. During the course of his convocation address delivered at the Calcutta University in 1902 he made offending remarks.

These derogatory remarks especially against the educated class created a furore. The educated took seriously this insult. Nothing could appear to be more distressing than the insults hurled against the politically advanced class of the country. Curzon's words could not be taken lying down and the intelligentsia protested. This protest made Curzon more angry and he came out with still more sarcastic remarks which made the situation still worse.

This was not a conflict between a few individuals. Both the clashing parties represented certain forces working on distinctively antagonistic lines. While Curzon's utterances manifested the outlook of the alien ruling bureaucracy, the protest of these educated class people was a protest of the entire people because in the prevailing circumstances the intelligentsia was the only politically conscious and advanced class in India. But Lord Curzon looked upon the public speakers and writers with contempt. He considered them worthless, incapable

of doing any work of national regeneration. In his view the habit of exaggeration had laid such firm hold of them that they were like persons who had taken too much drink. Undermining their importance he stated during the course of his convocation address in 1905:

It is not the most fluent nations in the world who have done the most in history...When everybody talks, then as a rule few act, and when the talkers talk too much and too often, then finally nobody pays any heed, and the impression gets abroad that they are incapable of actions. . I sometimes think that if fewer resolutions were passed (at the conferences and meetings) and a little more resolution was shown—resolution to grapple with the facts of life, to toil and labour for your country instead of merely shouting for it—the progress of India would be more rapid. Eloquence on the platform is very much like soda-water in a bottle. After the cork has been removed for a little time all the sparkle has gone. Moreover, eloquence no more regenerates nations than soda-water gives fibre and strength to the constitution. Do not believe that the man who can make a speech is necessarily a statesman.¹¹

With such derogatory remarks he tried to undermine the influence of the intelligentsia. These remarks were more than sufficient to prove that in the India of Lord Curzon's conception

there was no room for an Indian intelligentsia aspiring to lead and speak for the masses; and in so far as the Indian educated classes claimed to be the prophets of what they themselves spoke of as "the new nationalism" which was stirring in the land, he simply brushed them aside. The India which he pictured to himself was a land of vast spaces peopled by a patient and primitive peasantry, content to raise their crops and rear their cattle and to leave all other things

11. C.S. Raghunatha Rao, ed. by, *Notable Speeches of Lord Curzon* (Madras, the Arya Press, 1905), pp, 365-66.

to the superior and, on the whole, beneficent power to whom chance or providence had entrusted them.¹²

This description of India as drawn by Lord Curzon could never be acceptable to the educated Indian who thought that the preaching of such lessons to the Indian backward ignorant masses meant nothing but to keep them ignorant and to continue the perpetual process of their political and economic exploitation. Surendra Nath Banerjea stated:

They look with wishful eyes to the mass of our people, the great body of our illetrate countrymen, and they pose as their champions and spokesman....In their opinion the masses are dumb, inarticulate and unconcerned with anything except their own interests, never caring to peep out of the circle of village life in which they live and have their being. But when it comes to the question of self-government for India, the government of our countrymen by the people of our country, then all of a sudden, by a strange magical transformation the masses, in the opinion of these people, became vocal and even claimed and they may exhibit a concern, even a measure of anxiety, at the prospect of a change which would transfer authority from a bureaucracy to their own countrymen—the blood of their blood and bone of their bone.¹³

Though it is true that the upper middle class from which came the majority of the educated was isolated from the masses, they claimed to be in a better position to look after their interests than the bureaucrats, most of who were aliens and stayed in India only till their retirement from government service.

Meanwhile Lord Curzon took another step which alienated the educated Indians. In order to introduce certain changes in educational system the Simla Education Conference was

12. Ronaldshay, *The Life of Lord Curzon* (London, Earnest Benn Ltd., 1928), vol. 11, p. 419.

13. *Speeches and writings of Babu Surendra Nath Banerjea* (Madras, 1932), p. 129.

held. During the conference, Curzon had decided that the problem of the universities should be given separate and public consideration. A University Commission was, therefore, set up in January 1902 and given the widest powers of enquiry into all aspects of university administration. It was instructed to recommend such measures as might tend to "elevate the standard of university teaching and to promote the advancement of learning." The commission was presided over by Thomas Raleigh, then Law Member of the Viceroy's executive council. Among other members of the commission there was included a Muslim who was Director of Public Instruction in the princely state of Hyderabad. A Hindu judge of the Calcutta High Court was also later appointed when Hindus complained that their community was not represented.

The commission's report was presented in June 1902 and the Indian intelligentsia was surprised to learn that their status was endangered. "The Town Hall and the Senate Hall of the University (of Calcutta) have been packed with shouting and perspiring graduates", wrote Curzon to the secretary of state, "and my name has loudly hissed as the author of the doom of higher education in India."¹⁴ But when, towards the end of 1903, the precise nature of Curzon's proposals for university reform became known, the opposition of educated Indians—particularly those in Bengal—almost reached its climax.

The main accusation levelled against the recommendations was that they would make the universities into an appendix of state, placing them—according to G.K. Gokhale, one of the nationalist leaders—under "the narrow, bigoted...rule of experts." This charge contained a substantial element of truth. But the real apprehension of the intelligentsia was that they might lose their own predominant influence in the institutions of higher education. They were convinced that the government intended to restrict the opportunities for higher education open to young Indians. But what really enraged Indian intellectuals was the provision which vested in the government the right of ultimate decision on the recognition

14. Cited by Michael Edwardes, *British India* (London, Sidgark & Jackson, 1966), pp. 246-47.

of schools and the affiliation, or dis-affiliation, of colleges. The colleges were thus to be subject to government inspection and would have to comply with government conditions in respect of their governing bodies, the qualifications of their teaching staff, their financial situation, the standard of their buildings and accommodation, the adequacy of their libraries, and their facilities for practical instruction in science.

Educated Indians claimed that, by these means, the government proposed to restrict the number of students receiving higher education. They were, in fact, right. The university reforms represented an attempt to reduce—by legislative action—the output of Western-educated Indians. The attempt was not successful; the number of students was not reduced, nor was the number who failed their examinations.

Thus Lord Curzon's acts assisted in generating a militant nationalism in India. The newly emerging nationalism demanded the Indianisation of the Education Department, replacement of English by the Indian regional languages as the media of instruction and examination; the teaching of history from the indigeous angle rather than that of the alien power; and generating a feeling of patriotism among the students of schools and colleges.

But the bureaucracy was planning in other direction. There was made the promulgation by the Government of India, of the infamous Risley Educational Circular on 6 May 1907. It was designed to prevent the students from participating in the political movement aiming at India's liberation. Commenting shortly afterwards on 8 May 1907 on the nature of circular Aurobindo remarked; "At last the *Brahmastra* which Lord Curzon forged for the stifling of patriotism through the instrumentality of the University is to be utilized and utilized to its full capacity."¹⁵

Indians are familiar with the particular skirmish in the first Swadeshi struggle in which Sir Bampfylde Fuller lost. Sir Bampfylde insisted on the disaffiliation of the Serajunge

15. Haridas Mukherjee & Uma Mukerjee, ed., *Aurobindo and the New Thought in Indian Politics: A collection of his writings* (Calcutta, 1964), p. 53. See also *Selected Works of Jawaharlal Nehru* (Orient Longman Ltd., 1972) I, p. 205.

Schools because the teachers and students were publicly taking part in politics. Lord Minto's Government refused to support him in this action because it was inadvisable, having regard to the troubled nature of the times, and Sir Bampfylde had to resign. Whatever stronger motives were behind Lord Minto's action this was the occasion for a resignation which practically amounted to a dismissal. Now Indians were finding the same Government and the same Lord Minto "out-Fullering Fuller" and threatening in much more critical times against all Government or aided or affiliated colleges and schools—the action which Sir Bampfylde contemplated against only two.

The circular letter issued to the provincial governments "with the object of protecting higher education in India" from any connection with politics was an awkward and clumsily worded document such as Indians would not have expected from Sir H. Risley, but it managed to make its object and techniques quite clear. The object was to put a stop to the system of National Volunteers which was speedily growing up throughout Bengal, to use the universities as an instrument for stifling the growth of political life and incidentally to prevent men of ability and influence in the education line from becoming a political force. This was how Lord Minto, presumably with the approval of John Morley, proposed to bring about these objects. The objects of their "benevolent and high-minded" attention were divided into four classes—classboys, schoolboys, college students, schoolmasters, professors, and for each a different treatment was carefully prescribed.

For students in high schools, "In the interest of the boys themselves, it is clearly undesirable that they should be distracted from their work by attending political meetings or engaging in any form of political agitation. In the event of such misconduct being persisted in and encouraged or permitted by masters or managing authorities, the offending school can after the due warning be dealt with - (a) by the local government, which had the power of withdrawing any grant-in-aid, and of withholding the privilege of competing the scholarship and of receiving scholarship-holders; (b) by the University, which can withdraw recognition from the school, the effect of which is to prevent it from sending up

pupils as candidates for Matriculation Examination.” Students in high schools were, therefore, to be debarred from all political education and brought up on an “exclusive diet of Lee Warner and Empire Day.” Attending political meetings outside school hours, (although it might be with the full consent of the guardians) was to be reckoned as misconduct coming within the scope of school discipline. It was to be punished by the flogging or expulsion, of the boys. But when did the teachers or the managing authorities remember that they were men and not dogs who for a little food from the Government were ready to do its will just or unjust? What if they declined to do the Government’s dirty work? Then the local magistrate appeared on the scene and took away the grant-in-aid and the privilege of competing for scholarships and of receiving scholarship-holders. But supposing there should still be found a Vidyasagar or two who would contemptuously spurn these bribes and prefer to keep his manhood? For that also this official circular had provided. The school could be refused recognition, a refusal which meant exclusion of its students from college education. For this purpose the local government was to report to the University, “which alone is legally competent to inflict the requisite penalty.” But if this sole legal authority should decline to act on the report of the local Government? Then, there was another sole authority which was legally competent, the Government itself. In the words of Aurobindo the report was to be understood not as a report but as an order,¹⁶ and if it was disobeyed, the University “would fail to carry out the educational trust with which the law has invested it, and it would be the duty of the Government to intervene.”¹⁷

The next class was composed of University students. In their case the Government was not prepared to punish them, as a general rule, for merely attending political meetings. Except in special cases, e.g; if it were a meeting addressed by Bipin Chandra Pal or Syed Haidar Reza or Tilak, they would be punished. But if they took an active part in the Meeting, then the need for discipline would begin. Any action which would bring the so-called undesirable notoriety upon their

16. Ibid, p. 55.

17. Cited by Aurobindo, Ibid.

college, would be sufficient ground for Government interference. Picketing was, of course, forbidden to the students and so was open violence. On the other hand, the schoolmaster was leniently treated. He was graciously conceded the right of having his own opinions and even of expressing them within limits set by the alien bureaucracy. "If therefore, the public utterances of a schoolmaster are of such a character as to endanger the orderly development of the boys under his charge by introducing into their immature minds doctrines subversive of their respect for authority and calculated to impair their usefulness as citizen and to hinder their advancement in the after life, his proceeding must be held to constitute a dereliction of duty, and might be followed by taking disciplinary action."¹⁸ In plain unofficial English the schoolmaster was allowed to teach loyalty and subservience, but if he taught patriotism, he must be suspended, degraded or dismissed. If he took his pupils or encouraged them to go to political meetings—barring celebration of the empire Day, he would, of course, be dismissed at once. Finally, the college professors, men like Surendra Nath Banerjea, Aswini Kumar Dutt, Krishna Kumar Mitra, were not to be altogether gagged but their hands were to be bound. "If he diverts his students' minds to political agitation", as Surendra Nath Banerjea had done for decades; "If he encourages them to attend political meetings "he must personally conduct them to such meeting"—this was obviously aimed at Krishna Kumar Mitra and the anti-Circular Society—"or if he adopts a line of action which disturbs and disorganizes the life and work of the college at which he is employed",—whatever this pretentious phrase may mean,—the college was to be disaffiliated or the offender expelled.¹⁹ Expressing his views on the prohibition Aurobindo remarked contemptuously:

This ukase out-Russias Russia. Not even in Russia have such systematically drastic measure been taken to discourage political life and patriotic activity among the young. Not even the omnipotent Tsar has dared to issue an ukase to arbitrary, oppressive and inquisitorial purpose. It means that no self-respecting

18. Ibid, p. 56.

19. Ibid.

patriot will in future enter or remain in the Government educational service in any position of responsibility; or if he remains he will not be allowed to remain long. It means that the position of private schools and colleges will become unbearable and they will be compelled to break off connection with the Government University. It means, if there is a grain of self-respect left in the country, then the Government University will perish and National University be developed. And for this reason we welcome the circular and hope that its provisions will be stringently enforced.²⁰

• Aurobindo relentlessly continued to oppose the Risley Circular. In his view it was a desperate attempt of the bureaucracy not only to recover and confirm its hold on the students and through them on the future of India, but to make that hold far more stringent, rigid, ineffugable than it ever was in the past. He alleged that the bureaucrats did not care very much if certain accademical ideas of liberalism or nationalism were imparted to the young by their teachers but they wanted to stop the active habit of patriotism in the young; for they knew well that mere intellectual habit untranslated into action was of no value. Continuing his criticism Aurobindo added that the Risley circular with its sanctimonious professions of anxiety for the best interests of students and guardians was in reality a powerful attack on the growing spirit of nationalism at its most vital point. As such Indians must understand it and as such resist it.²¹ He also called upon the young students to defy the circular by declaring an educational strike and profit by it mentally, morally and physically.²² He also held that in order to make progress the nation must get into the habit of offering challenges rather than receiving them. And passive resistance can be one of the techniques of offering challenges.²³

The bureaucracy overlooked such criticisms of the nationalist forces and continued unabated to take a series of

20. Ibid, p. 57.

21. Ibid, pp. 77 and 79.

22. Ibid, p. 83.

23. Ibid, p. 87.

measures to curb the national awakening in India. Nothing could prove better the hopelessly retrograde character of the absolutism in India than the banning the study of the History of England from the curriculum for the Entrance Standard prescribed by Calcutta University. For some time there had been a good deal of insistence by Englishmen of the ruling circles on the injurious effect produced on the youthful minds of the Indian students by the study of Mill, Macaulay, Spenser and other writers on political philosophy. These men possessed no better power of appreciating the ideas and actions that had won their country the world's respect than could the signatories to the loyalist manifesto understand the secret of India's greatness and the necessity of making her join the comity of nations of the East and West. They trembled to see an Indian reading *Representative Government*, because the study of it, they knew, led to the enfranchisement of the intellect, the unfettering of the will, and begot a reasoned conviction of the supreme value and need of freedom. And no doubt it was men of such calibre and temperament who had ruled English history out of the schools of Bengal. The one perpetual endeavour of Englishmen in this country was to forget that they were Englishmen, that they had anything to do with a country the purpose of whose history had been the increasing realization of its people's equality and freedom. They only preferred to think and remember that they were the conquerors of India, and set a special store by that part of the Bible which enjoined on men to render unto Caesar what belonged to Caesar. Their vision of life was bounded by the dream of an India remaining satisfied with perpetual slavery, and hence their fear at the sight of books that inculcated the basic need, the indispensability of liberty. "The message of popular freedom jars", wrote Aurobindo, "on their ears; they are sickeningly full of the cant about the failure of democracy. They do not, as a rule, like to go to their country permanently, the atmosphere of equal liberty for all chokes them; they hate the common people in England they will frankly tell you, they are so impertinent, you know. The division of ruler and ruled, the enjoyment of privileges and immunities is the very breath of their life; they gloat over the delicious thought of being in undisturbed possession of monopolies that shall remain for ever theirs,...of having eternally at their disposal the thousand and one resources of

a country of 300 millions people who shall be subservient at their will.”²⁴

Aurobindo held the English bourgeoisie responsible for the slavery of India. He pointed out that the Swadeshi and Boycott Movement threatened their aspiration. And Anglo-India, the agent and trusted servant of that particular class in England, with her “soul completely steeled against all consideration” of humanity by the long, continuous and inconsistent indulgence in the exercise of irresponsible authority, was bent on “treading underfoot everything” that tended to elevate the human mind to the thought and realization of its own dignity, to the appreciation of national autonomy as an essential requisite of life. She had, therefore, to “confess herself ashamed” of the history of her own people which she had not the courage or the strength to permit the Indians to study any longer. The self-devotion of the leaders of the popular movement in India reminded her perhaps a little too unpleasantly of the days of Hampden and Elliot, and in “nervous dread” she banned the “dreadful” book whose pages glowed with the praise of these men and presented them as illustrations before mankind. He alleged that she was haunted by the spirits of England’s dead past, and was almost afraid of their “reincarnating on Indian soil.” Did it not look strange that along with nationalist preachers and papers, the history of England must also go. Continuing his comment that such measures of the British would prove futile he referred to the growing national consciousness:

Too late alas! India has risen for ever from her slavery-sleep; she has grasped the full meaning of liberty, and is resolved on having it at any cost. By trying to shut the people out of all those avenues of thought that point to liberty as the beacon-light of men’s progress, you simply intensify the intolerance of autocracy, which is now the sole preoccupation of the Indian mind. We welcome this throwing out of your country’s history; it will only help to swell the number of students who are daily seeking admittance into the institutions of National Education; it will

24. Ibid, p. 179.

enable them to become national in extent as they are now so in aim and method. You will never be strong enough to stamp out the National Education movement in our country. And even could bureaucratic guggling shut us out from the study of European history, we have learned what we had to learn from it, and that which is ours, you cannot take from us, the capacity for utter self-abnegation and self-immolation which is of the soil and not borrowed from the West, and which will now be poured with all the grandiose virility of old no longer merely into the pursuit of individual salvation but into the service and salvation of the Motherland.²⁵

Movement for Mass Education

The conflict between the bureaucracy and the educated reflected a conflict in the approach of the two forces towards the planning of education in India. Curzon and the bureaucracy pleaded for *qualitative* reform of education to serve its administrative needs more efficiently and to prevent the people from becoming politically conscious to avoid the growth of political unrest and to govern the people in their ignorance and illiteracy. But the nationalists led by Gokhale and others emphatically proclaimed that the most urgent necessity of India was *quantitative advancement*, which meant the speedy education of the people on a mass scale. They pleaded that to prefer qualitative reforms to quantitative was to put the cart before the horse. After all, qualitative change could be useful only when education had become a universal phenomenon. They finally held that there was not going to come out any material gain to the people unless education had spread all over the country. They also alleged that the real motive behind the bureaucratic plea of qualitative change was not so much related with the improvement of educational standards but with preventing the growth of the national consciousness in the people. These nationalists had come to realize from their experience of educated unemployed youth, who, being unable to get lucrative jobs in the government services turned ardent revolutionaries pledged to the eradication

25. Ibid, pp. 181-82.

ion of alien rule from India or joined the rank and file of the nationalist movement led by the Indian National Congress, that the speedy expansion of education on the mass scale was bound to produce more nationalist-minded forces pledged to the independence of India. Moreover, the national leaders were greatly impressed by the progress made by independent and self-governing Western nations like the U.S.A. and Germany which attached great importance to education as the foundation of all national greatness both in standards of wealth as well as of intellect. A smaller country like England had more than a dozen of universities. It was an indispensable precondition of national amelioration in a country like India where ignorance and superstition were widespread, penury and poverty were the general order, want and starvation were greatly prominent, independence of thought and action was almost unknown and the control of the nation was completely administered by a handful of aliens.

Hence in their writings, petitions, memorials and leaflets they demanded that universal popular education must be provided by the State, and should be the first item of expenditure incurred from the State revenues. Any endeavour to impart mass education by private agencies and private funds would prove of not much utility.

The question of mass education was a matter of increased expenditure. But the Indian leaders alleged that the popularization of mass education had been hampered due to the allocation of the finances to those items which assisted the process of perpetuating alien domination. Lala Lajpat Rai complained:

So long as the cost of General Administration remains what it is and no reduction is effected by the larger employment of native agency for the high-paid and costly European agency, and so long as the Military is maintained on that ruinous scale as at present there is little prospect of increased expenditure being incurred on education from provincial and Imperial revenues.²⁶

26. *Lala Lajpat Rai*, a collection of his writings (Madras, Ganesh & Co., 1910), p. 158.

The leaders also alleged that the Government was luxuriously spending for official pageants and for partitioning of the provinces and thereby setting up costly administrations.

The cause of nationalism was enhanced when in its resolution passed at the Session of 1905 the Indian National Congress emphatically protested against the education policy of Government of India and stated that "the material and moral interests of the country demand a much larger expenditure on all branches of education, and a beginning in the direction of Free Primary Education."²⁷

The extremist nationalists, however, thought that as the British Government was not interested in providing mass education the nationalists must emphasize the immediate need of political freedom without which Indians could not obtain the necessary control over their financial resources. So long as they continued to remain under an alien bureaucracy they could not have the funds needed for the purpose of an adequate national education on mass scale.

On innumerable occasions in the annual sessions of the National Congress the speakers quoted the Imperial Edict promulgated by the Emperor of Japan which declared: "It is hereby designed that there may not be a villager with an ignorant family nor a family with an ignorant member."²⁸

Pointing out the benefits of mass education at the 1911 Session of the Indian National Congress during his speech on Elementary Education Bill, Gokhale stated with confidence:

I for one am confident that we shall succeed in lighting a torch in this country the light of which will fill and flood all the land, the rays of which will penetrate into every nook and corner, dispelling darkness. I am quite sure that if we do our duty well in this matter the future will rest with us, and this great work will be accomplished. Then in that event we

27. *Report of the proceedings of The Congress Session* held in 1905, p. 79.

28. *Report of the proceedings of the annual session of the Indian National Congress* held at the Calcutta in 1906, p. 90.

shall have laid the foundation of a noble democracy in this country in which tens and tens of millions will come in the forefront that have long been kept in the outer darkness, and countless number of our countrymen will be relieved from misery and despair. The task no doubt is a formidable one.... Let all of us, young and old, high and low, rich and poor, sinking all minor differences, press forward with a single end in view in the service of our motherland, our hearts all cheered with the great task before us, our eyes fixed on this shining vista glimpses of which we can get even in these days. Let us press forward whether success comes or failure comes, let us press forward like men.²⁹

By raising their capacity to read and write the national leaders wanted to make the masses fit for making a keener enjoyment of life and a more refined standard of living. It meant the rising up of their greater moral and social efficiency and economic well-being. It would enable them to get rid of the exactions of the unscrupulous moneylender or against the misuse of the official authority by the arrogant and petty persons in power. It would also lead to the growth of industrial efficiency in the workers. Sincerity and sympathy would begin to emerge to ameliorate their deteriorated lot. At the 1911 session Sachindra Prasad Bose ended his speech by exhorting the assembled delegates to remove illiteracy from the country:

Let us go in hundreds and thousands and tens of thousands for these teeming millions of India, and carry this message of salvation to them. Let us carry the stores of knowledge from door to door and within a short time, will find from every cottage of this vast continent...will rise one long and ceaseless cry which will demand in no uncertain words a system of education which will not only be free but compulsory also.... Let the cry go forth from that Nalandha gate, to the teeming millions of India, educate your children, educate all your children, educate everyone of your children.... It is the universal balm, the sovereign

29. *Report of the proceedings of the annual session of the Indian National Congress* held in 1911, pp. 107-08.

remedy, in all sorrows and sufferings that flesh is to hair.³⁰

These intensive speeches in every annual session of the Indian National Congress gave expression to the growing force of aspiration for status. The open expression of national opinion paved the way for the establishment of national institutions of education all over India in the years to come. During the course of their survival they became the repositories of national culture and pioneers of progress. The speeches created among the advanced intelligentsia the vision and intellectual breadth essential for the achievement of the goal of national independence, democracy and equality. They brought the growing realization to the people that the progress of universal compulsory education would mean the progress of the Indian community.

The movement in favour of imparting mass education was not confined to addresses delivered at the annual conferences and meetings, and to the writings in journals. The intensity of public demand for rapid universal education was so great that it was felt in official circles. The nationalist elements were also not slow to bring the problem before the Imperial Legislative Council, where Gokhale became a champion of universal compulsory primary education. He introduced a bill in the Council in this connection.

But all this pleading proved futile and the bill was rejected by 38 votes to 13. Failure did not discourage him. He kept on emphasizing the validity of his stand.

The endeavours of these nationalists did not go in vain. Despite the rejection of Gokhale's bill the prime importance of the primary education was taken into cognizance by the alien government. It introduced a resolution on educational policy in 1913 and implemented it in the following years. However defective and uninspiring might have been the contents of the bill and its implementation in later years the introduction of the bill displayed the force and strength of the rising nationalism.

30. Ibid.

Gokhale's work was taken up more vigorously by Vithalbhai J. Patel who introduced and managed the passage in the Bombay Legislative Council in 1918 of a bill for the introduction of compulsory primary education in the Municipal areas of Bombay. The act provided for the introduction of primary education in the urban areas compulsorily and freely for both sexes. Despite the many limitations, it set an example for all India. It was a victory of the nationalist forces engaged in diffusing knowledge to their people. This pioneering attempt was imitated by a number of other states like Punjab, United Provinces, Bengal, Bihar, and Orissa, Central Provinces, and Madras which introduced similar bills and had them enacted.

The demand for popular education was also supported by the politically advanced classes among Muslims through their cultural bodies like the All-India Muslim Educational Conference. In their public addresses and writings they advocated the necessity of compulsory elementary education. They also emphasized the need for more scholarships and funds for educational advancement. In his presidential address delivered at the annual meeting of the All India Mahomedan Anglo-Oriental Educational Conference held in 1915 Justice Abdur Rehman complained:

I doubt if there is another country in the world where the educational status of the people is so low as in India. That of 255 millions, only 15 millions can read and write is a phenomenon which cannot be paralleled elsewhere.... How could anyone be content or happy in such surroundings?³¹

Referring to the development of mass consciousness in this connection Rehman continued:

I have been much struck by the fact that men belonging to the poorer classes are as keen to see that their sons receive a certain amount of education as those belonging to the upper crusts of society.... The condition of all, however, is equally deplorable.³²

31. An extract from the text of the presidential Address published in the *Indian Review* (Madras, 1916), Vol. XVII, p. 26.

32. Ibid.

The new movement among Muslims steadily grew. The various cultural institutions working in this direction exhorted their people to take interest in the problem. In the course of his presidential address delivered at the thirty-second session of All-India Mahomedan Educational Conference Sir Ibrahim Rahimtullah pointed out that "there was only one way in which the Mussalmans could take their rightful place in the progress of the world and that was through education in a wider sense. ..There is a genuine awakening amongst the Moslems of India to be up and doing."³³

The Muslim leaders alleged that there had taken place an intrusion of mercenary motives in the sphere of learning and it had been a bane and a curse. They wanted to change this particular course of learning and make it worthy of their ancient greatness.

In the 1917 session of the Mahomedan Educational Conference the President, M.A.N. Hydari, emphasized on the reorganization of Madrassas, the education of girls and to speed up the work of Calcutta University Commission and the establishment of a university at Aligarh. Hydari concluded his address with the parable of sword:

But a single weapon is at hand, and the air re-sounds "draw the sword before blowing the horn." That sword is the sword of education, for which sacrifice every thing, so that the demon of ignorance and illiteracy in our country may be laid low for ever, and our men and women walk proudly on this earth, a great people conscious of the centuries of glorious achievement behind them and conscious of the power of still greater achievement in the centuries to come.³⁴

The fact that there could be no real progress for Indians without universal mass education was being realized in an ample measure by all the various political groups as well as the major communities of India. There appeared to be no injustice more intolerable than to keep their people engaged

33. An extract from the text of the presidential speech published in *The Indian Review* (Madras, 1915), pp. 6 & 14.

34. *Indian Review* (Madras 1918), p. 61.

in ignorance, superstition and squalor.

Thus the movement for popular education acquired a national character and strengthened the forces of national reconstruction.

Movement for National Education

Besides the constant demand and the agitation for the expansion of education on a mass scale, and in which considerable success was achieved, another significant development of the period was the growth of the concept of national education. However, it should not be inferred from this statement that there did not exist any idea of national education in the nineteenth century. The idea did exist. The enquiry made by the Indian Education Commission in 1882-83 reported the growth of an India-wide consciousness on the educational problems. Despite its existence the concept could not take practical and concrete shape except in the establishment of a few private institutions like Anglo-Oriental Aligarh College, Gurukul Academy at Kangree, the Anglo-Vedic College at Lahore and the Central Hindu College at Benaras. But most of these institutions inculcated the narrow spirit of nationalism that had inspired their founders. However, their sectarianism was governed by some kind of mystically exalted spirit. Concepts like "country", the "nation", the "Motherland" etc. always had foremost place in their thinking and affection. But most of these institutions were imbued with the spirit of either Hinduism or Mohammedanism. They were not working within the defined dimensions of secular nationalism free from religious and fanatic bigotries. For instance, the Mohammedan Anglo-Oriental College at Aligarh was the symbol of the newly emerging Muslim nationalism. Though it was educational in function it was political in scope and impact. Similar was the case with other colleges. Though the educational amenities provided by those institutions were open to persons of all creeds, denominations and religions, the nationalism aimed at was primarily denominational. Each institution built an atmosphere of its own—very much different from the other.

Besides, all these institutions functioned within the framework of the official system in so far as they yielded to depart-

mental inspection and received grants-in-aid from the alien government. They were merely meagre endeavours to correct a few shortcomings of the official pattern and not the symbols of an irreconcilable endeavour of struggle against it. Despite the manifestation of the spirit of sacrifice on the part of the founders and managers of these institutions they were governed by narrow considerations which were far from being truly national in character,

It was the introduction of Lord Curzon's Viceroyalty and his antagonistic policies that led to the growth of the concept of national education, along with the growth of the militant phenomenon of nationalism. The partition of Bengal by Lord Curzon alarmed the entire nation. To nullify the bifurcation of Bengal there developed a great agitation the like of which was never before organized. Out of this agitation came the Swadeshi and Boycott Movements whose spirit left an everlasting impression on every mode of life. Influenced by the newly emerging fervour of nationalism and the repeated conflicts with the official policies on education, and the utter failure of nationalist elements to make the alien bureaucracy give a sympathetic hearing to the Indian view on education, there arose a movement for the organisation of national education. Between 1905 and 1919 thus we come across a great ferment of educational ideology.

There was unanimity of approach among almost all the national thinkers, academicians and politicians on one point. All of them castigated, though with different degrees of eloquence, the prevailing bureaucratic system of education which appeared to be apathetic to the growth of nationalism in India. Nobody came out more unequivocally than Mrs. Annie Besant to denounce the English domination of India in the sphere of education. She stated most emphatically:

Nothing can more swiftly emasculate national life, nothing can more surely weaken national character, than allowing the education of the young to be controlled by foreign influences, to be dominated by foreign ideals. From 1896 onwards, I have ventured to urge on the Indian people that the education which was given to their sons was denationalising and dispiritualizing. Foreign habits, foreign manners, foreign

dress, foreign ways are all enforced in a foreign language, within missionary schools, a foreign religion to boost, sterilizing the boy's heart, and dispiritualizing his whole nature. Is it any wonder that the national spirit decayed.³⁵

By emphasizing the superiority and efficiency of the Government controlled institutions the members of the alien bureaucratic set-up tried to undermine the influence of the national movement of education. But the forces of national regeneration did not appear to be in a mood to accept the *status quo* however efficient its management might have been. It was considered no substitute for national education. They refused to be an educational dependency of a foreign power. In their view the spirit of national traditions and aspirations should permeate every educational institution. No longer should nationalism be considered synonymous with sedition. During the course of his stirring presidential address delivered at the Bengal provincial conference held at Patna in the second week of February 1901 Rabindra Nath Tagore stated:

I do not think that the educational institutions in our country are India's alms bowl of knowledge; they lower our intellectual self-respect; they encourage us to make a foolish display of decoration composed of borrowed feathers. The result is we reproduce—but we do not produce.³⁶

The leaders also alleged that for the perpetuation of its own domination the alien regime was not interested in imparting true knowledge to the people. It was keeping them in complete ignorance of patriotism and their duty to uplift their own country. There were no arrangements made for learning about India, her history, philosophy, literature and art, etc.

This criticism of alien rule played a very significant role in making the people conscious of the drawbacks of alien

35. *Speeches and writings of Mrs. Annie Besant* (Madras, G.A. Natesan), p. 95. For further study see Lajpat Rai, *The Problem of National Education in India*, pp. 104-05 & 107.

36. For detailed study of the speeches at the conference see the *Dawn Magazine* (Calcutta) April 1908, Part III, pp. 57-61.

control. The more they read such writings, or listened to such speeches rendered from public pulpits the more they felt that until alien control was removed nothing tangible for the welfare of their country was going to emerge. The people became antagonistic to and severe critics of the British rule in India, and this attitude strengthened the forces of nationalism.

On the other hand, the leaders, academicians, poets and authors pondered seriously to define precisely what the system of education ought to be. All opinions, of course, were not the same. They were bound to differ in the prevailing environment. However, on basic principles and formulas they agreed and these came to be universally agreed upon in due course.

The first unanimously agreed fundamental principle of the new system of education was that it should be national in character, free from sectarian and communal feelings. In a resolution passed at the 1906 session of National Congress it was stated that in the opinion of the Congress, the time had arrived for people all over the country earnestly to take up the question of national education for both boys and girls and organise a system of education—literary, scientific and technical—suited to the requirements of the country, on national lines and under national control.³⁷

Resolutions on national education were passed at every session of the Indian National Congress. But the Congress platform was not the only place where the demand for national control of education and the organization of the curriculum on national lines was raised. During the course of a speech delivered at Barsi in 1908 Tilak said: "We have come to the conclusions that for proper education national schools must be started on all sides."³⁸

The national leaders also believed that for the resurgence of the national spirit in India impetus should be provided for

37. *Report of the annual session of the Indian National Congress held in 1906*, p. 98.

38. *Bal Gangadhar Tilak, His writings and speeches* (Madras), pp. 84. For further study see pp. 86-90.

the inculcation of patriotism through the curriculum. Illustrations of patriotic devotion and heroic deeds should be learnt. No scheme of national education would be complete without it. In this matter Lala Lajpat Rai believed, Indians should borrow illustrations from Europe. Every European country, and the United States also, made it a point to cultivate the spirit of patriotism and nationalism through its schools. In every living community inspired by national ideas and ambitions the national consciousness expressed itself through the school as perhaps through no other institution. From a study of the schools of Europe, the methods followed by them, and the text books used therein, one could very well study the growth of national consciousness and national purpose, in the different countries of Europe and America. It was considered necessary that the ideas of the nation be unified and the youth of the nation be led to realise the gravity of their national problems. In other words, the systematic inculcating of "a staunch and true devotion to the Fatherland, sufficient to weather any crisis", became a vital principle of education in Western schools. To strengthen his stand point Lalaji quoted the following extracts from French books:

- 1) Do you know what the fatherland is? It is the house where your mother has carried you in her arms. It is the lawn on which you play your joyous games. It is the school where you receive your first instruction. It is the town hall where floats the flag of France. It is the cemetery where your ancestors rest.... It is the fields which bear the traces of the labours of your fathers. It is the hills, the mountains which you have so many times climbed....

Men of the same country are *compatriots* : they form a great family, a nation.... They have the same history, the same joys, the same hopes. They sorrow over the humiliation of their common fatherland, and take pride in her prosperity; they share her fortune, good or bad.

- 2) The fatherland is the nation which you should love, honour and serve with all the strength of your body, with all the energy and all the devotion of your soul.

- 3) Be ready when the day arrives, be prepared to endure hunger, thirst and cold for the sake of the Fatherland. Be ready to die rather than abandon your post.
- 4) To march in weather icy cold or burning hot, often with sounded feet, with chilblains, to lie on the damp earth, to suffer thirst and hunger; all this must be endured gaily. Those who complain are bad comrades for discouragement is contagious....Keep cool under fire, and we shall be invincible.³⁹

The above extracts establish the fact that such teachings played a very significant part in the building up of the national psychology.

Simultaneously in his plan of national education Lala Lajpat Rai exhorted his countrymen to discard the narrow loyalties of village, city, province and region. He warned against the imparting of narrow selfish patriotism. There should be understanding between nationalism and cosmopolitanism. Nationalism should be co-operative in character yet a cohesive entity in form. In his view the teaching of patriotism in the country and its importance in the plan of national education must revolve round this line. And there were available in both Hindu and Muslim literature illustrations to strengthen this feeling and to bring it parallel to the ever inspiring and patriotic verse of Walter Scott. Besides, text books for the primary school should inculcate the love of India, of Indian rivers, hills, landscape, scenes in simple language. Was there any place on earth which was more majestic and inspiring than the Ganga or the Brahmaputra or the Nerbada or even Sindh? In short, in physical features, natural scenery, fertility of soil, productive climate, Indians had everything in their country to be proud of, he held. Lalaji, however, forgot to remember that the upper classes have generally exploited the masses by raising such emotional slogans.

Elucidating his argument in his writing Lalaji called upon the politically advanced classes to evolve an educational system which would impress upon the young mind the basic

39. Lajpat Rai: n. 35, pp. 50-1.

necessity of oneness. It should be the vital article of patriotic duty. He stated that every Indian child should be taught clearly that every human being who was born in India or of Indian parents, or who had made India his or her home, was a compatriot, a brother or a sister, regardless of colour, creed caste or vocation. It should be made absolutely clear to every Indian youth that in India there was no such thing as the conflict of races. No Indian, Hindu or Mohemmedan, ever attached any significance to his racial origin or to the racial origin of the rest of his people. These distinctions were only a matter of imagination or conjecture. More often than not they were a pretext for political dominance and economic exploitation.⁴⁰

Some of the nationalist leaders favoured the idea of inculcating the spirit of patriotism by dwelling upon the common past heritage. In the newly set-up educational institutions the history was to be taught in a new manner. Those who were to prepare and write the new history books should be "patriots, pulsing with love and pride in the splendid story of India's past."⁴¹ The history books should insert stories, anecdotes and episodes of chivalry of ancient Indians no matter to what party, religion or race they belonged. Mrs. Annie Besant emphasized, "Boys and girls of different religions should be taught to look with equal pride on Prithviraj, Pratap, Sanga, and Akbar, and Guru Nanak, and Man Singh, and Shivaji, and Chand Bibi, and Ahalya Bai; Makers of India were they, and hundreds more, and every Indian heart should cherish them all, and glory in them all as India's children.... We shall breed patriots therein."⁴² Besides, patriotism was to be developed in the younger people through the study of Indian literature, achievements in the science and art and in the ancient wars.

The national leaders also laid down that the new system of education should train boys in the art of politics. They should have first-hand knowledge of political developments all over the world. In the light of those political developments

40. Ibid.

41. Annie Besant, "Nation-Building", *The Indian Review* (Madras, 1906), Vol. VII, p. 882.

42. Ibid.

they should train themselves in the secrets of self-government. Expressing his views in this connection Bal Gangadhar Tilak wrote in *New India*:

National education is only a branch or a means to the attainment of self-government, and those who demand Home Rule for India cannot but zealously support a movement for the establishment of National Education in this country.⁴³

Besides these broad features some of the national leaders also pleaded for the teaching of Hindi as one common Indian language. Mrs. Annie Besant stated that there should be taught one common language which would serve everywhere as a means of communication between educated alike. Hindi ought to make a second language throughout the country. In addition to the boy's own vernacular, he should always learn Hindi, for that was the most widely spread vernacular of the country, and one could go from one end of the country to the other and talk in Hindi to all, save the most illiterate people in every part of it. The learning of Hindi was a sacrifice that Southern India might well make to the unification of the Indian nation.⁴⁴

The upholders of the cause of national education were strongly in favour of removing the predominating influence of English. Particularly they were against its maintenance as the medium of instruction. They wanted to replace it by modern vernacular languages. In this connection the observation made by Deshbandhu Chittaranjan Dass in the annual meeting of the Bengal Provincial Conference in 1917, is worth mentioning. Addressing the gathering he stated most emphatically:

If we want to lead our newly awakened national consciousness in the paths of our true knowledge, education will have to be diffused through the medium of our own vernacular and not through the unwholesome medium of English.... To restrain foreign and unneces-

43. *Bal Gangadhar Tilak*, n. 38, p. 86.

44. *Writings and speeches of Annie Besant* (Madras, G.A. Natesan, 1921, 3rd ed.), pp. 86-103 & 106.

sary luxury ought to be one of the chief ends of true education.⁴⁵

All these features of planning a national system of education aimed at moulding the outlook of the younger generation in a new fashion. It was to be encouraged to develop a spirit of self-reliance so that the people might become real men and not machines. The end of national education was not for creating or producing one vast clerk class, but for fitting all classes for national work so that there might be created what Tagore once called "true sons of the country who will make her service an absorbing life-work and not a mere leisure-hour business taken up as a variety, who away from titles, without any hope of reward or recognition, will quietly...lay...the foundation of the India to be."⁴⁶

It may casually be mentined that despite much deprecation of the prevailing system of education, almost all the national academicians and reformers were in favour of retaining, and indeed retained the main features of modern education as enunciated by the alien regime. They preserved its liberal note, its emphasis on personal freedom, its rejection and refutation of dogmatism and emphasis on modern natural sciences. Even the Arya Samaj, which castigated the alien impact in a militant tone, accepted and inserted its teaching in the curriculum, despite its strong emphasis on Hindu religious instruction like the principle of the infallibility of the Vedas.

The task of organizing the new institutions imparting the new system of national education from the Primary to the University level was not an easy one. The suitable teaching staff well acquainted with the new ideals of national education had to be found and trained. A new curriculum reflecting the innovations of national education had to be framed. People were to be persuaded to get their children educated in the institutions of the new world. And no less hard was the problem of collecting funds in order to administer the system.

45. *Deshbandhu Chitta Ranjan*, n. 2, pp. 56-7.

46. *Dawn Magazine* (Calcutta) April 1908, Part III, p. 61.

Educational Conference

Despite these heavy odds the new system did start functioning. As a result of the new political developments like the agitation against the Partition of Bengal the mental and moral forces of the people were channelized in favour of an independent system of education. The political turmoil in Bengal affected the young intellectuals. Influenced by the spirit of patriotism they came out openly to agitate, arranged political meetings and mass demonstrations and boycotted the bureaucratic educational system. In such critical circumstances it was felt to be a duty of utmost national importance to arrange properly the education of the young who had suffered due to political movements. The first meeting of the Educational Conference was organised by eminent public men of Bengal on 16 November 1905 at the Bengal land-holders Association under the presidentship of Raja Pearey Mohun Mukherjee. After a discussion for some time the assembly resolved that:

in the opinion of this Conference it is desirable and necessary that a National Council of Education should be at once established to organize a system of Education—literary, scientific and technical on National lines and under National control.⁴⁷

The foundation of schools of national learning inaugurated a new phase in national life of India. It was a wholesome departure from the practice so far followed under alien rule over the whole of India.

The movement also gained support from societies like the *Dawn Society* and the *Anti-Circular Society* which were playing an important role in rousing the sentiments and passions of the people for national education. The *Dawn Society* undertook the liability of implementing the constructive part of the programme. It established the National Council of Education in 1906. This Council finally proposed the establishment of a national university. The object and constitution of the national university were laid down as:

47. National Council of Education Calender for 1906-08, Appendix A, pp. 17. For further study see pp. 18-24.

To impart Education—Literary as well as scientific and technical on National lines and exclusively under National control, *not in opposition to but standing apart from* the existing system of Primary, Secondary and University Education.

It was also recommended in the Report that “Education on National Lines should *imply among other things*:

1. a) Imparting of Education, *ordinarily* through the medium of the Vernaculars, English being a compulsory subject.
- b) The preparation of suitable text-books, especially in the vernaculars.
2. Promoting of Physical and Moral Education.. *and inspiring students with a genuine love for and a real desire to serve their country....*
3. *Attaching special importance to a knowledge of the country, its literature, history and philosophy and incorporating with the best oriental ideals of life and thought the best assimilable ideals of the West*, imparting of Scientific, Professional and Technical Education chiefly in those branches of Science, Arts, and Industries...which are best calculated to develop the material resources of the country and to satisfy its pressing wants....
4. Enforcement of a strict discipline including paying proper regard to the religious sentiments and customs of the different sections of the community in accordance with the best traditions of the country.”

Another recommendation was that the National Council “was to be thoroughly democratic and representative of the nation.”⁴⁸

While almost all nationalist leaders of Bengal agreed about the inadequacy of the prevailing system of English education

48. *Dawn Magazine*, March 1906, pp. 104-12.

they did not come to agreement on an alternative plan. Some of them favoured the total boycott of Calcutta University controlled by alien Government and thus favoured complete educational autarchy and aspired after instituting the "three-dimensional system" of education—literary, scientific and technical—combined on national lines and under national control. The liberal group demanded simply the supplementing of the literary education of the prevailing system by a regular arrangement for technical education under national management. Hence on the occasion of the inauguration of National Council on 11 March 1906 there occurred an ideological conflict, culminating in a split in the nationalist camp. Thus came into existence the Bengal National College and School on 14 August 1906, run by those radical nationalists favouring the complete boycott of the prevailing system of English education and secondly, the Society for the Promotion of Technical education (S.P.T.E.) embodying the moderate views of educational reform on 25 July 1906, imparting only technical education. On the other hand, the curriculum of N.C.E. was broadbased and comprehensive. In its scheme of education to be imparted was a special study of the works and time of eminent historical personalities like Washington, Bismarck, Victor Emmanuel, Mazzini and Garibaldi, Solomon the Magnificent, Mutsbohito, Ferdinand and Isabella, Napoleon Bonaparte, Peter the Great, Fredrick the Great, Changiz Khan, Abraham Lincoln and Kosciusko. There was also a provision for researches into ancient Indian history, philosophy, economics, and culture. Thus the basic ideal of the N.C.E.'s scheme was to speed the pace of national progress and to realise the ultimate aim of national existence. The entire programme aimed at training students intellectually and morally so as to mould their character according to the highest national ideals, and on its technical side making them efficient and qualified for developing the resources of the country and increasing the wealth. The spirit of nationalism which led to the foundation of Bengal National College inspired all its plans and programmes of study. There were also established national schools at a number of other places.⁴⁹

49. For further study see Haridas Mukherjee & Uma Mukherjee, *The origins of National Education Movement 1905-1910* (Calcutta, 1957); Michall Edwardes, n. 14, p.249 and *Quinquennial Review 1902-1910* (Govt of India Press).

CULTURAL PROGRESS

C—Role of the Press

Newspapers are compared to night-watchman, keeping the executive officers in wholesome fear of public opinion....Through the instrumentality of the press attention is directed to the public conduct of every functionary from the highest to the lowest, from the Prime Minister to the pettiest servant of Government, and thus, there exists a reasonable guarantee that no injustice shall remain concealed.

[Kesari, 4 January 1881, No. 1, p. 1.]

Socio-cultural Contribution

In a not less significant manner the Press contributed to the growth of the socio-political awakening. By publishing the day-to-day activities of various social movements it also brought them in touch with the common man. It led to the inculcation of progressive tendencies like the reorganization and unification of the social organism in the light of modern requirements. Editors like G.A. Natesan also published the cheap editions of selected or collected speeches and writings of the leaders of social renaissance like Swami Vivekananda, Swami Dayananda, Ranade and others. These cheap editions were read by the people of humble means all over the country, and they were inspired by them to make their own contribution to social integration and eradication of communal and caste prejudices.

A certain section of the press owned by the people of vested interests in various castes and communities also tried to infuse, and to some extent it succeeded in this process, sectarian feelings, communal tendencies and caste prejudices in

the people. These activities hindered the process of national integration. This section of the press also encouraged the infusion of unhealthy tendencies of de-Indianization and, faith in the legitimacy and justification of British rule in India.

But a significant contribution made by the press was in cultural sphere. It introduced Indian society to the etiquettes, manners and other socio-cultural patterns of Western civilization. Like some other agencies of national progress it acquainted the people with the utility of Western dress, Western civilization, Western furniture, Western methods of living, mixing of the Indian people with the Westerners in their evening clubs and societies, the centres of intellectual discourse, study groups on contemporary and historical research in politics, philosophy, literature and other social and technical sciences. With certain minor exceptions when it induced the young intellectuals and college and university graduates to be dominated by the process of too much Anglicization, the work of the press in the socio-cultural sphere led to inculcation of modern tendencies in the newly growing generation.

The twentieth century marked the beginning of a new era in Indian politics. Political observers were witnessing the organisation of public opinion in a manner hitherto not contemplated. And this manifestation of organised public opinion was not confined merely to political speeches or political demonstrations on the mass level. Its specimen could be traced in the development of the press which was not lagging in expressing people's political aspirations. It spread in the country ideas of justice and equality not only between individual and individual but also between class and class; it stimulated public spirit and set high standards of public duty.¹ It became, in the main, a potent instrument of progress. It also gave articulate expression to the political consciousness seen in the newly emerging sentiments of national integration, and enlightened thinking and acting.

At this stage of the development of the Indian press it is to be remembered that the bourgeois and, to some extent feudal, classes who owned and controlled it, although

1. *Speeches of Gopal Krishna Gokhale* (Madras, G.A. Natesan & co., second ed., 1916), p. 405.

articulated India's aspirations for political progress, yet their deeply inculcated self-interest did not encourage them to give a straight fight to British Imperialism. Rather the uneven and hindered growth of capitalism often led them to compromise with colonialists. Their very class origin did not orientate beyond a mendicant policy of prayer and petition. Very soon and particularly with the beginning of the twentieth century a stage arrived in the development of Indian politics when the petty-bourgeois class revolted against the compromising nature of the Indian bourgeoisie. The revolt was full of great idealistic patriotism. In order to articulate its grievances, it searched its tools of struggle in the ingredients of the indigenous socio-cultural set-up. For instance, exhorting the politically conscious young people to imbibe the spirit of patriotism the *Navasakti* dated 22 January 1908 wrote in an inspiring and stirring tone:

Will it do, brother, to remain asleep anymore? Will it do, brother, to remain gaping like a fool any longer? Awake with a firm determination to ensure redress. As soon as your sleep is broken you will find that motherland which in your sleep you now consider to be poor, destitute and fallen and like a beggar, that motherland is really that land of India which is the queen of queens, your motherland. Lo! our Mother has again put on the royal crown and is calling only ourselves. Who is eager to declare himself (her) son? Come, come, come running, the time of worshipping the Mother is come; see on all sides the ceremonies of the worship have begun; hark! the priests are chanting the mantras: "...The particles of whose dust are like gold...Where it is auspicious to die; in which land (our) grandfathers laid their bodies; by whose fearless sons even their lives were always set at naught in battle-fields...Victory to that auspicious land of birth".²

To make people's faith and conviction deeply entrenched in the new ideology of nationalism and the new planning of the national edifice, the petty-bourgeois nationalist press uti-

2. *Report on Native Newspapers in Bengal for the week ending 1st February 1908 (confdl.)*, No. 5, pp. 198-99.

lized some of the oldest and most primitive sentiments reflected universally in the history of mankind. It started eulogizing the productive vitality, the climate, the contours of mountains and valleys, of rivers and forests, of the Indian peninsula. The entire land appeared to be incomparable for the abundance of her crops and the sweetness of her waters and fruits, richness of vegetation. This extolling of the native characteristics manifested a belief in the all-round superiority of their society. It appeared to be more glorious than heaven itself. Under the title "The Religion of Patriotism" *Bande Matram* extolled: "Is she not our Motherland—the land that has till very lately laughed with health and plenty crowned."³

However exaggerated, mystic, unbelievable and inarticulate these descriptions might have been, they were surcharged with new emotions. They were the natural elements out of which the structure of nationalism was gradually built. They corresponded to certain unignorable facts like the territory and common descent which, broadly speaking, embodied in a wide context the ingredients of nationalism. They manifested the acceptance of a certain purpose welding together all the heterogeneous elements into a single unified entity of feelings, ideas and practices. Thus they boosted the morale of people. The daily *Hitavadi* (Calcutta) dated 28 November 1905 published an exhorting poem:

A gigantic trial now awaits thee
Sacrifice thy life in the fire...
We shall watch thy power,
Thy patriotism and devotion.
And shall see how long thy glory endures
How much blood flows for country's cause...
Once born, man must die.
Nevertheless he must act;
It is only base cowards that flee through fear.⁴

To consolidate the process of Hindu awakening the press referred to the achievements of antiquity. In those days

3. *The Selections from the Bande Matram* (Banaras, Swaraj Publishing House, 1922), p. 2.

4. *Report on Native Papers in Bengal for the week ending 2 December 1905* (Confidential), No. 48, p. 1141.

science, mathematics and poetry were cultivated. All the world was imagined to be elevated by listening to the chanting of the hymns of the Samaveda by the *sadhus* living in the hemitages. The love for the Hindu awakening also found forceful and moving expression in revealing the chivalarous deeds of the Aryan kings and their subjects. *Jugantar* of February 1908 wrote:

Not a mean place this country is.... Ram Chandra... was the lord of the earth and seas...,the subjects were plain spoken and morally bold...,Hindu kings used to observe this eternal law of regal virtue. Today also the same multitude of subjects exist who are devoted to the eternal religion and who call themselves Aryas or Hindu. The land of India is a sacred *pitha* which was possessed by your fathers and grand fathers.⁵

Anti-Imperialism

With the growth of patriotism reflected in the columns of the nationalist press, the perpetuation of imperialist rule in India caused more thought. Its presence, it was felt, was responsible for imposing grievous disabilities upon the inhabitants of India who were denied any real share in either government or administration of the country. The great mass of the people got a very meagre share of the national wealth which was exported in substantial proportions every year to England. The monopoly of the politico-economic privileges exercised by ruling agencies affected the natural progress of Indian civilization. It was bound to get stern treatment at the hands of editors interested in the advancement of India. To make the people conscious of these facts the journals spotlighted the phenomenon of economic and political exploitation by the foreign power and sounded a new note of warning to the alien rule. Papers like the *Kesari*, the *Maharatta*, the *Kal* entered the field and they heralded the coming of a new era. They regarded journalism not as a profession but a mission for propagating the ideals of national liberation. They also tried to create a new confidence in the vitality of

5. *Report on Native papers published in Bengal for the week ending 8 February 1908 (Confdl.)*, No. 6, p. 249.

their people. "Beloved sons", wrote *Kal* dated 10 September 1909, "of India... please listen. We, Aryans, are no sheep. We have... our heroes, statesmen and soldiers.... We do not owe all these things to our contact with the English people. When the ancestors of those who boast today of their adventurous spirit and their civilization were in disguising state of barbarism or rather even centuries before that period, we were in full possession of all the nobling qualities of head and heart."⁶

During the period under study the *Kal* was being published from Bombay in Marathi. It was edited by S.M. Paranjpe who was an ardent admirer and active supporter of Tilak. He was also a writer of outstanding ability. His comments and writings appearing in *Kal's* columns gave a great impetus to the imagination of young Maratha intellectuals. V.D. Savarkar, the great revolutionary leader and his friends considered S.M. Paranjpe their *Guru*. The most remarkable characteristics of Paranjpe's writings were sarcasm, banter, humour and ridicule, all of which he utilised very strongly against the members of the alien bureaucracy. His writings were acclaimed as incomparable and, it is told, are unequalled in Marathi literature and journalism even to the present day. Apprehensive of the revolutionary national fervour generated in the mind of youth by Paranjpe's writings appearing in *Kal* the government banned them and the ban was lifted only after independence. The most significant among all these volumes is the collection known as *Hymns of Freedom*. The book exhorted the people to encourage their ego which possessed a supreme power to raise the stature of the country. Discontent symbolized, wrote Paranjpe, abundance, while content destroyed the abundance. In adverse circumstances a contented man preferred to embrace death rather than to be trampled under the feet of the enemy; but a discontented man dared to fight with whatever was available at the moment.⁷

The Marathi-speaking people were stirred deeply by the militant nationalism advocated by *Kesari* which became the

6. *Report on the Native Papers published in the Bombay Presidency for the week ending 11 September 1909* (codfdl.), No. 37, p. 18.

7. B.N. Agrawala, *Viplav yagya ki Aahutiyan* (Mirzapore, 1970), p. 35.

centre of Indian radical nationalism. In the remote corners of the Marathi-speaking regions the word *Kesari* was interpreted to mean newspaper, and under the editorship of Tilak, Khadilkar and Kelkar it became a household word. The columns of *Kesari* appealed to the reason. Its editorials gave a new lease of life to the Indian nationalist movement so far controlled by the Moderates. Its spirit of enterprise accelerated the concepts and ideologies of nationalism. To educate the general mass of people there appeared articles, comments and writings on every issue of social, moral, literary and political significance. They roused the sentiments of the reader almost to the boiling point. Worth quoting here are a few verses recited on the celebration of Shivaji Day on 12 June 1897. They were published on 15 June 1897 in *kesari*. Their translation into English conveyed the following purport : "There was a time when no one raised his eyes towards Indian women. If some one dared, thousands of swords were drawn from their shields. But now, on an available opportunity the demons (British) insult our women by dragging them out of the train. Oh cowards! How you tolerate it? Raise your voice in protest." Referring to the British ruler it was said: "He has become mad. Throw him out soon from here. Snatch the privileges of these luxury lovers. Our symbol is goddess sword."⁸

In other writings the journal welcomed the bomb age. In an article entitled "Misfortune of our country" appearing on 9 June 1908 the Bengal Government was taken to severe task for using cruel and brutal methods of suppression against the young revolutionaries. Still another write-up "Bravo, our Bengalee Brethren" resulted in six years imprisonment for Tilak. At the trial the editor refused to buy and withdraw the article.

An advocate of the militant political philosophy in Maharashtra was the English weekly *Maharatta*, published from Poona under the editorship of Tilak. Unlike *Kesari* the weekly was motivated with the design of providing to the intellectually advanced section of the nationalists the political material for thinking intelligently on the problems of the day. The

8. Cited by B. N. Agrawala, *Ibid*, pp. 40-1.

views of the paper were also very explicit on the issues of national interest.

The trio of *Kal*, *Kesari* and *Maharatta* grew so much in popular favour that other papers like the *Indu Prakash* and *Dhyan Prakash* were overshadowed. They altered the attitude of social organism. The cause of social reformism paled into background as against the rise of revolutionary fervour.

Both the *Kesari* and *Kal* had to pay a heavy penalty for their independence and militancy in political articulations. The Secretary to the Government of Bombay, in forwarding the report of the year 1893 on the Indian Press, commented: "A wave of religious revivalism with its inevitable embitterment of social distinctions has passed over Hindu Society. Furious denunciations unsupported by a particle of evidence and a wild inconsistency of language have characterised the least respectable organs of Hindu opinion and attacks upon rival religious bodies have been transferred to the British Government."⁹

In 1897, the Bombay Presidency was passing through an economic crisis. Widespread famine and outbreak of pestilence convulsed the Presidency. In an atmosphere surcharged with anti-imperialist hatred, the officer on plague duty in Poona was shot dead. The Anglo-Indian press was mad with rage and raised an alarm of British rule in danger. The colonialists were thrown into a panic. The city of Poona was placed under punitive police and searches for hidden arms was carried out. People were in great panic. Exhorting the people not to feel victimized by any sort of official fear Tilak wrote a leading article entitled, "would the Government use its brain?" He posed the problem, "Is the mind of British Government at its proper place?" He alleged that setting aside their brains they were acting like that mad elephant who crushed everybody coming in its way. In a sad tone Tilak added that failing to arrest the revolutionary responsible for the death of Mr. Rind the Government had burst out, lost the balance and bent upon terrorizing the people. Quoting a comedian character "Crocker" from the writings of Goldsmith,

9. Political Department. (Bombay), No. 4314, 16 July 1894.

Tilak compared him with the Government of India. He also compared the official bureaucrats with those well-fed horses kept in a stable, which were never used but fearfully trembled on seeing just a fly on their bodies. Referring to venomizing propaganda of the Anglo-Indian papers he postulated that even in a minor mishap they found the germs of British overthrow from India. He concluded : "such royal drum beaters and mercenaries of Empire can be replied and silenced only by the murder of Mr. Raind."¹⁰

Soon after Tilak was prosecuted for incitement to violence and spread of disaffection against the Government and sentenced to 18 months' imprisonment.¹¹ Section 124-A of the Penal Code was redrafted and made more stringent. The Government of Bombay, in its letter to the Government of India observed: "The most unsatisfactory feature in the situation is the increase in the circulation of the newspapers which are most violent in their tone. Thus the *Gurakhi* — twice convicted... has a daily circulation of 5,000 copies. Similarly the issues of the *Kesari* have risen from 12,000 to 13000 while the *Kal*, which is the most militant and audacious of all the newspapers published in this Presidency, found subscribers for 2,500 copies."¹² The official letter goes on to complain of want of maturity in the press and accuses it of deriving its inspiration entirely from the Congress.

Among the dailies it was the *Times of India* (Bombay) which was doing an excellent job by supporting the cause of peasants and workers against the feudal and bourgeois classes. It reserved ample space for publicity to the strikes of the workers. Rarely there was a strike of workers against the colonial and indigenous bourgeoisie which went unnoticed by the management of the paper. The paper also published articles demanding the reduction of working hours, elevation of living and housing conditions of the workers, provision for bonus and insurance against hard labour.

10. Statement cited by B.N. Agrawala, n. 7, pp. 122-23.

11. See the judgment delivered by the prosecuting Judge John Strachey, quoted by B. N. Agrawala, n. 7, pp. 33-4.

12. Jenkins, J.L; Acting Secretary, Government of Bombay, to the Secretary, Home Department, Government of India: Political Department, 23 August, 1901, No. 5962.

In Bengal prominent nationalist paper was *Bande Matram*, an English daily from Calcutta. The paper was also the organ of the school of militant nationalism. It was started in 1907. Sri Aurobindo Ghose was the leading personality of the paper. Besides being one of the directors he also worked on the editorial staff. Besides him there were persons like Bipin Chandra Pal who was also one of its principal contributors. The paper disapproved the old mendicant technique of prayer, petition and protest. It advocated the new principle of self-help and self-reliance. It preached *swadeshi* in all affairs like politics, education, culture and civilization, and commerce and industry. It preached the organization into one great force of all those who were interested in organizing the nation for work and agitation. The nationalism that it advocated denominated not politics but a religion, a faith and a creed. Due to its powerful emotional writings the paper quickly achieved for itself a recognised standard in the history of Indian journalism, and won the praise of its critics and enemies equally. Despite its brief existence of about 3 years it became a mighty force throughout the country. Its writings appeared to be dangerous and "seditious" to the alien regime, which banned its publication ultimately.

The North-western Provinces (U.P.) Press took its clue from the Bengal and Bombay journals, but was moderate in its views. Among the Vernacular papers the *Oudh Akhbar*, the *Hindi Hindustan* of Raja Rampal Singh and the *Aligarh Institute Gazette*, and among the English papers the *Hindustan Review* and *Kayastha Samachar* and the *Advocate* were conducted with intelligence.¹³ The *Hindustan Review* and *Kayastha Samachar* were two of the best get-up papers. The tone of the *Citizen* continued to be the same, generally finding fault with the Government.¹⁴ The *Advocate* praised the work of the Congress and stood for all the bourgeois-liberal thought in the country. The Anglo-Indian policy of treating India as a conquered country was condemned in no uncertain terms. The extension of Curzon's Viceroyalty was not welcomed by the Press. The exclusion of Indians from the higher

13. *Memorandum on the Press in the United Provinces during 1903*; Home Department, Public (confd.) Progs; Part B, June 1904, No. 7.

14. *Ibid.*

posts in the military was called "Imperialism with vengeance."¹⁵

In the Punjab prominent nationalist paper published from Lahore was the *Panjabee*. Its proprietor was Lala Lajpat Rai. It was a prominent instrument in spreading the ideology of militant nationalism in the Punjab. It increased its circulation from 2,100 in 1907 to 4,322 copies in 1910. It also spotlighted widely the prevailing discontent of the people and opposed the repressive conduct of the alien regime vehemently. In the first week of May 1907 its proprietor was deported to Burma for expressing the disaffection and unrest of the people. The paper referred to this incident as an act of vengeance and unworthy and "Un-English" of a civilized government. Lalaji himself was willing to sacrifice a thousand Lajpat Rais so that national interest might be served. The *Panjabee* called upon every citizen of the province to take a vow not to touch foreign made and specially English articles. Very soon the paper was also prosecuted for being disloyal to the existing political system. Referring to the methods adopted by the alien rulers to inculcate loyalty in Indians to their regime the journal wrote satirically on 1 May 1907:

What more benevolent task could the worthy and sublime representatives of His Majesty the Emperor undertake on behalf of the benighted heathendom of India than to draw their dusky hearts towards an unselfish bureaucracy and secure them there with the golden chains of unfathomable gratitude. Its contemplation makes our shallow hearts overflow with the liquid of thankfulness. The inundation of India's gratitude is rising apace like a veritable Noah's Flood; and if not stemmed in time it will engulf and sweep away all the futile criticisms levelled at Mr. John Bull's Indian Government...and put an end to all the wails.¹⁶

Still another prominent paper published from Lahore was the *Paisa Akhbar*. It was owned by Mahbub Alam, and was a

15. Ibid.

16. *Report on the Native Papers published in Punjab with the week ending on 18 May 1907 (confdl.)*, No. 20, p. 172.

prominent nationalist paper. It was widely read in the Punjab when there was still illiteracy on a large scale. Its popularity can be measured from the fact that its circulation increased from 8,377¹⁷ in 1908 to 13,500¹⁸ in 1910. No other paper was so widely circulated in the Punjab.

Ghadrites in America

It may also be recalled that there was founded in 1913 in the United States of America a society named Hindi Sabha by Lala Har Dayal and Pandit Ram Chandra Peshawari. Its object was revolution. It was a society whose aim covered the well-being of all Indians the world over. Composed of poor students and workers, it had spent more than one and a half lakh of rupees in 1914 on national work.¹⁹ Speaking at one the annual meetings of the Sabha Pandit Ram Chandra pointed out that by the generosity of "our labouring brethren and good services of the young students" they organised thousands and still had to organise more than one million *Hindustanees* who were abroad from India. With their combined efforts they expected "tremendous result for the increase of our national dignity and honour" on educational and political lines. He added, "We are going to publish literature in and out of India to show the ignorant politicians of India what kind of greatness the modern nations have achieved in the nineteenth century and how the Indians have wasted and are wasting their precious time in petty quarrels, frothy talks and poetical aspirations. In the middle of this year we are going to send large deputation to all the civilised world and thence also to India to shake and wake the people from their slumber of centuries."²⁰ The society was spending money and energies on scientific education and practical arts with the great care and in accordance to the best experts in different lines. Its organizers were sure that in the near future they would bring India up to the same level as the progressive nations all over the world.

In an inspiring appeal Pandit Ram Chandra, at the end of his long address delivered at the 1914 annual meeting said:

17. *Report on the Native Papers published in the Punjab in 1907* (confdl), p.3.

18. *Ibid*, 1910 (confdl.), p.3.

19. See the *Report of the annual session of the Hindi Sabha of the United States of America* [Home (Pol.) B; June 1915, No. 549-52, pp. 7-8.]

20. *Ibid*.

“India is not and cannot live separate from the rest of the world. India will have to set aside its old religious quarrels and adopt a new system, the latest educational development and practical activities of the countries of the West including China and Japan. Young Indian! rise up, read thoroughly, think deep, then go back to India and sweep it with modern vital ideas and ideals.”²¹

According to a weekly report of the Director of Criminal Intelligence, Government of India, dated 8 June 1915 (which was reported to be burnt and not kept on record by recipients other than Heads of Provinces) there was published a paper *Ghadr* by the Indian revolutionaries in Amercia. The issue of 14 April 1915 contained an announcement that the paper was printed in the language of the Gurkhas as well as in Urdu, Gurmukhi, Gujrati, Hindi and Pushtu. The leading article of this issue criticized Indian politicians, in particular Lala Lajpat Rai, for subservience to the British rulers. Even after his deportation, it was said, Lajpat Rai demeaned himself by practising in British courts and addressing the presiding officer as “Your Lordship”. He even brought an action against a Calcutta newspaper for calling him a rebel. The members of the *Ghadr* party, on the other hand, took a pride in being called rebels. They had nothing to do with “political organisations in India, the member of which think they will get independence by asking for it.”²²

Several copies of a lithographed Urdu leaflet headed “An Appeal” and purporting to be signed by “Har Dayal of Europe” and “Ram Chand of America” had been intercepted in the post, by the Intelligence Department of Government of India. The leaflet was an appeal to Indians abroad to return to India and spread correct information about the war and how the tyranny of England and Russia would be increased if they were victorious. Rich men were asked to pay the passage money of their poorer brethren and were promised that their generosity would be recorded in the history of their country.²³

On the outbreak of First World War a large number of Indian revolutionaries were in Germany. They were supplied

21. Ibid, p.8.

22. Ibid, p. 7.

23. Ibid.

with funds by the German Government and it was reported that they had also received money from America. The chief members of the party were provided with credentials authorising them to get any assistance they might require from German consuls in neutral countries. The principal work of this party was apparently the preparation and distribution of anti-British literature in all languages. They published a weekly paper called *Hindustani* and also issued a series of pamphlets.²⁴

Press in the South

Like Ramanand's *Modern Review* of Calcutta, in the South G.A. Natesan was doing yeoman service to the cause of nationalism in India by publishing numerous political biographies, collections or speeches by leading nationalist figures, and symposia of their views and thinking on the significant questions of the day. All these publications are valuable records of Indian nationalism. At the young age of twenty-six Natesan resolved to bring out a monthly journal devoted to writings advancing the cause of national progress. He invited men of thought and maturity—both foreign and Indian—interested in the welfare of India to contribute articles in the columns of his journal, *The Indian Review*. The first issue of his journal appeared in January 1900. At the inauguration of the movement against the partition of Bengal the periodical enlightened the southern people with the contemporary problems of nationalism and exhorted them to devote themselves to the cause of national progress. During the War days when the movement for self-government gained momentum in India the journal published in its columns speeches delivered by the political leaders on public pulpits, and annual gatherings of their respective political organizations. The journal also gave articulate expression to the people's aspiration for self-government by commenting in its editorials from time to time.

But the tone of the Madras Press was generally temperate. In 1882, the *Swadeshmitram* was established by G. Subramania Iyer and soon became the leading Tamil paper which supported all progressive causes. Among Telugu papers, *Vivekavardhini* was a champion of social reform and *Andhra*

24. Ibid, pp. 16-17.

Prakashika dealt with general affairs including politics. In 1900, the number of newspapers and journals in the South stood at 161; 52 were Tamil, 32 Telugu, 17 Kannada, 27 Malayalam and 31 Hindustani.²⁵ The leading amongst them, besides the three mentioned above, were *Deshabhimani*, *Lokopakar*, *Vikata Duta*, *Prapancha Mitram*, *Kerala Patrika* and *Manorama*.

Towards the last phase of First World War there, however, appeared certain journals in Madras Presidency which sounded the note of British type of radicalism. Among them the most prominent was the *New India* of Annie Besant.

Muslim Journals

The beginning of the second decade of the twentieth century was marked by the growth of a new national consciousness among Indian Muslims. Great political movements within the country as well as in the West Asia were playing a significant role in moulding the political outlook of the indigenous Muslims. The growth of this new national consciousness also manifested itself in the sphere of Muslim journalism. A good number of Urdu journals edited and owned by the Indian Muslims began to be published. Among them the most prominent was *Al Hilal*. Its first number appeared in June 1912. The story of the publication of this journal is related by Maulana Azad in the following words:

My political ideas had turned towards revolutionary activities before I left Calcutta in 1908 (for the Middle East Sojourn). . . Contact with... Arab and Turk revolutionaries confirmed my political beliefs. They expressed their surprise that Indian Musalmans were either indifferent to or against nationalist demands. They were of the view that Indian Muslims should have led the national struggle for freedom and could not understand why Indian Musalmans were mere camp-followers of the British. I was more convinced than ever that Indian Muslims must co-operate in the work of the political liberation of the country. Steps

25. Tara Chand, *History of the Freedom Movement in India* (Government of India publication, Delhi, 1967), p. 465.

must be taken to ensure that they were not exploited by the British Government. I felt it necessary to create a new movement among Indian Musalmans and decided that on my return to India, I would take up political work with greater earnestness. After my return...I came to the conclusion that we must build up public opinion and for this a journal should be...powerful in its appeal.²⁶

The publication of this journal marked a turning point in the sphere of Urdu journalism. Within a short time it gained remarkable popularity. The people were stirred by reading its contributions full of strong nationalist fervour. It captured their imagination. Day after day the number of its readers increased—so much so that within the first three months all its old numbers had to be reprinted as every new subscriber wanted the entire set.

Like *Al Hilal* of Maulana Azad, *The Comrade* of Maulana Mohamed Ali also gave a new orientation to Muslim politics in India. Not only did the journal expose the weakness that had crept into the Aligarh Movement, it also became a “fire-brand” in disapproving the alien rule in India. Besides, it also exposed the *raison d’etre* of the communal patriot who outwardly displayed himself to be a staunch nationalist but represented in his politics the outlook of a rigid communalist. The paper was to prepare the Indian Muslims to make their due contribution to territorial patriotism. The weekly was careful about the prospects of the future when finally all communal interests had to be properly adjusted so as to harmonise and identify them with the paramount interests of India. Its editor was keen to see the establishment of an inter-communal federation of India as powerful and grand as the United States. He had significantly called his paper “comrade of all and partisan of none.”²⁷ Its first issue came out on 14 January 1911.

26. Maulana Abul Kalam Azad, *India Wins Freedom* (New Delhi, Orient Longmans, 1959), pp. 6-7.

27. *Congress Presidential Addresses* (Madras, G.A. Natesan, 1934) p. 623.

Repression

Since the repeal of Lord Lytton's Gagging Act of 1878 the Indian press steadily emerged as powerful force in moulding the indifferent outlook of the Indian people. Till 1908 it continued to enjoy a considerable degree of freedom and played a phenomenal role in spreading nationalist sentiments as well as in strengthening the nationalist forces. The tremendous publicity which the half-penny newspapers are in a position to bestow upon any object to which they turn their attention, gives them an enormous power. But their power is not merely the mechanical one of the searchlight. So long as they provide information they are tolerated. The moment they begin to think, they are quietly but firmly suppressed. The popularization of nationalist feelings came in direct clash with the political and economic interests of the alien regime which adopted repressive measures to curtail the powers of the Indian Press.

In 1903 the Government of India proposed to amend the Official Secrets Act of 1889. But it had to drop the idea as a result of the opposition from the nationalist elements. Gokhale also opposed the amendment. He strongly objected to the provisions placing civil matters on par with naval and military affairs. Criticizing the amendment he stated:

I would like to see the official who would venture to arrest and march to the Police Thana the editor of an Anglo-Indian paper. But so far as Indian editors are concerned, there are, I fear, officers in this country, who would not be sorry for an opportunity to march whole battalions of them to the Police Thana. It is dreadful to think of the abuse of authority which is almost certain to result from this placing of Indian editors, especially the smaller ones among them, so completely at the mercy of those whom they constantly irritate or displease by their criticism....The proper and only remedy...is...to discourage the issue of confidential circulars which seek to take away in the dark what has been promised again and again in the Acts of Parliament, the proclamation of the Sovereign and the responsible utterances of successive Viceroys.²⁸

28. *Speeches of Gopal Krishna Gokhale*, n. 1, pp. 214-15.

Continuing his opposition Gokhale added:

Nowhere throughout the British Empire is the Government so powerful relatively to the governed as in India....The press is, in one sense, like the Government, a custodian of public interests, and any attempt to hamper its freedom by repressive legislation is bound to affect these interests prejudiciously, and cannot fail in the end to react upon the position of the Government itself.²⁹

At the time of passing the Vernacular Press Act there was no Indian-owned paper published in English in Madras Presidency. However, this vacuum was filled on 20 September 1878 when the first issue of *The Hindu* was placed before the public for sale. G. Subramania Aiyar was, from the inception of the paper, the chief editor of *The Hindu*. He was assisted in his functions of editor by C.K. Menon, K. Subba Rao and K. Nataraja Aiyer—all of whom worked devotedly for the progress of the paper. Gradually, *The Hindu* became the centre of political activities of the moderate Congress leaders. The resources of the press were fully utilized to educate the public about the political significance of the first all-India political body of the Indian intelligentsia. In 1889 the paper was converted into a daily. In its comments the paper was of liberal outlook and sober judgment. Against the suppression of the Press freedom it also protested strongly on 7 August 1907:

Apparently there is to be no end to this persistent policy of repression. The Government in its wisdom do not see that such steps will only complicate the administration of this country. Instead of wasting their energies in this deplorable direction, why should not they try to reform the administration by facing the problem boldly and sympathetically? Hunting of newspapers cannot possibly confer on the people more freedom and more happiness. A hundred and fifty years of English rule in India ought to have improved conditions in this country to a remarkable extent. But

29. Ibid, p. 222.

we find no such advancement. The responsibility for this state of affairs lies with the Government.

And the paper ended its comment with a quotation of Gladstone:

It is one of the uniform and unfailing rules that guide human judgment if not of the moment, yet of history that when a long relation has existed between a nation of superior strength and one of inferior strength, and when that relation has gone wrong, the responsibility and the guilt rest in the main upon the strong rather than upon the weak.³⁰

To curtail the freedom of the Indian press the Government enacted the Newspapers (Incitement to Offences) Ordinance VIII in 1908. The Ordinance empowered the authorities to take judicial action against the editor of any paper which indulged in dissemination of views or comments considered by officials to be inciting to rebellion. His press was liable to confiscation. Seven prosecutions under the Act resulted in the confiscation of presses, four of these in Bengal, two in the Punjab and one in Bombay. Their securities were forfeited to an extent which bewildered the public and alarmed the journalists.

The projection of these repressive measures on the freedom of the press was condemned as undemocratic, inexpedient and retrogressive by the nationalist forces. In the curtailment of the press privileges was read the suppression of a powerful instrument of political education and propaganda, a great means of popularizing among the masses the ideas of representative political institutions, individual liberty, and democratic framework of societies. In the suppression of its power to express opinion independently was witnessed by various political parties the curtailment of a popular technique utilized to propagate among the people their respective political programmes, policies and means of struggle for national independence enunciated by them from time to time. To safeguard the privileges of this powerful institution the Indian nationalists of all political views struggled jointly. Under the caption

30. *Report on Native Papers published in the Madras Presidency for the week ending 30 August 1907 (confdl.)*, No. 31, p. 341.

“The Duty of the Indian Publicist”, Shri Aurobindo proclaimed:

The nationalists of the country must now all combine to ensure the continuity of their preaching notwithstanding what the bureaucracy might do. It is foolish and dishonest to contend that we must not speak what we mean, that we must not preach our countrymen what they really require, that we must delude them with untruths and half-truths, that we must not rouse their enthusiasm, appeal to their imagination, touch their feelings and work them up to a religious fervour. We must continue to inspire our countrymen to use a grave diligence in caring for high things and in making their national life rich and exalted. The Indian publicists have no business to exist if they do not disseminate principles of national independence and freedom. The bureaucracy wants to restrain our activity in this direction not because we are all advising the acquisition of freedom through dishonourable means but because from recent events they fear the immense possibility of a really dutiful and competent Indian press.³¹

At this critical juncture newspapers like *The Statesman* (Calcutta) appeared as the apologists of despotism and mouth-pieces not of an idea or of a policy but of the individual grievances of a self-seeking politician whose influence had waned to nothing because he could not satisfy the new demand for courageous and disinterested patriotism. Professing to be a liberal paper, *The Statesman* defended the despotic regulation under which the Press freedom was curtailed and Lala Lajpat Rai was deported—a regulation opposed to all the basic principles of liberalism. It also defended the coercive ordinance as a proof of the leniency and liberalism of bureaucratic rule in India. Calling itself a friend of India, it had not scrupled to dissociate itself from its brother friends of India, the British committee of the Congress, and sneered at them as ill-informed nobodies. After throwing the Congress,

31. *Selections from the Bande Matram* (Benaras, Swaraj Publishing House, 1922), p. 51.

its principles and friends overboard in this extraordinary fashion, it had still continued to lecture the Moderates on the necessity of supporting the Government in its action of suppressing the freedom of the Press. On the other hand, newspapers like *Bande Matram* not only championed the cause of undiluted freedom but pooh-poohed the concept of peaceful co-existence between the bureaucracy and advocates of Indian nationalism. It wrote:

Indian aspirations and bureaucratic autocracy cannot stall together; one of them must go. The growth of the New Spirit had been so long tolerated in Bengal because the rulers, though alarmed at the new portent, could not at once make up their mind whether it was a painted monster or a living and formidable force. Even when its real nature and drift had become manifest, they waited to see whether it was likely to be taken hold of the people. They were not prepared for the enormous rapidity with which, like a sudden conflagration in the American prairies, the New Spirit began to rush over the whole of India. By the time they had realized it, it was too late to crush it in Bengal by prosecuting a few papers or striking at a few tall heads. For the New Spirit in Bengal does not depend on the presence of a few leaders or the inspiration from one or two orators. It has embraced the whole educated class with the unquenchable flame. If Srijiut Bipin Chandra Pal were deported and the *Bande Matram*, *Sandhya* and other Nationalist journals suppressed, the fire would not become silent, prevailing, irresistible. A hundred hands would catch the banner of Nationalism as it fell from the hands of the standard bearer and a hundred fiery spirits rush to fill the place of the fallen leader.³²

Comparing a journalist and the bureaucracy the newspaper held that the latter had armed itself with such "liberal" powers of repression that a journalist attacking it was like a

32. Haridas Mukerjee & Uma Mukerjee, compiled and edited, *Sri Aurobindo and the New Thought in Indian Politics: Collection of Aurobindo's writings appearing in the Bande Matram* (Calcutta, Firma, K.L. Mukhopadhyay, 1964), p. 60.

man with no better weapon than a pebble assailing a Goliath panoplied from head to foot, armed with a repeating rifle and supported by howitzers and maxim guns.³³ In this tussle of belligerency the paper alleged that no great truth or idea had been able to win its way to victory in Europe without "drenching the ground behind it with the blood of its votaries." It charged that even after the enfranchisement of the rest of Europe, the Russian bureaucracy refused with a stubborn blindness to abide by the lesson of history, and was fighting its ground "inch by inch" with the people, "gloating over the flood of blood with which the country is overflowing."³⁴

To protect the press—the vital and indispensable agency of nationalism—the various newspapers and periodicals struggled against the alien government on a belligerent level. The radical journals challenged the very legality of the perpetuation of foreign rule in India. They deprecated the very system to be dishonest and unscrupulous. For the perusal of the general reader are quoted below two such specimens extracted from the columns of the radical periodical *Sandhya* appearing on 22 and 23 January 1908 respectively:

Oh brother! the litigation in the *Feringhi's* court is but a game of deceit, Where there is deceit there is hide and seek... We want that the people of this country should see the real (manifested) form of the *Feringhi*. Let the veil of the great illusion of the *Feringhi* be removed—no matter what may happen to the *Feringhi's* lot.... This factionless, this abusing, for all this is the *Feringhi* not responsible? In fact, so long as the dazzle of the *Feringhi's* love is not removed, you will not go and sit in your stronghold. We want to dispell this dazzle.... The *Feringhi* has not indulged in...tall talk out of any desire for our welfare.... We want to explain but this much, that to the vanquished all conquerors are the same, equally oppressive, and equally persocuting.... The welfare of the country is impossible unless *Feringhism* is given up — that

33. Ibid, p. 171.

34. Ibid, p. 161.

verance is far away if any reliance is placed in the *Feringhi's* word of hope.³⁵

In another writing the journal commented:

We do not get frightened at frowns....We speak plainly not with the object of destroying your Government. We know that by virtue of the soil of India none can for ever exercise his authority here with the sceptre of Government in hand. The Musalman is gone, and you will go also, no matter whether we abhor you or praise you. Oh *Feringhi*! you have not come to this country to stay. This is our firm belief—our living conviction. We only want to show you that whatever sort of laws you make, we can deceive you at every step—and we deceive you. The more you increase the coils of law the greater will be our crookedness. Make new laws and you will see the fun. Stupid *Feringhi*, you are the ruler of India simply by good luck; for we have known by one scratch what your qualifications are.³⁶

Thus the radical wing of the Indian nationalist press persistently and openly proclaimed that the only cure for the disabilities of the country was independence from alien domination. And this independence was to be won by brave deeds and self-sacrifice on the part of young national revolutionaries. No stones were left unturned to furnish from Hindu mythology, ancient and modern historical events, and more especially the European literature of revolutionary phases, such illustrations which justified violent revolt and to proclaim its inevitable victory. Mazzini's gospel of national salvation, Kossuth's militant political doctrines, the activities of the Russian Nihilists, the renowned dialogue between Arjuna and Krishna in *Gita*—all these were continually extolled in the columns of the press to impress upon the minds of young nationalists the futility of British rule in India. In spite of the continuous repression the dailies like Bhupendra Nath Dutta's *Jugantar*, Upadhyay's *Sandhya*, Aurobindo Ghosh's *Bande*

35. *Report on the Native Newspapers in Bengal for the week ending 1 February 1908 (Confdl.)*, No. 5. pp. 199-200.

36. *Ibid.*, p. 201.

Matram and Tilak's *Kesari* and *Mahratta* and Paranjape's *Kal* preached with extraordinary success a political creed which was dangerous to the continuance of bureaucratic absolutism and were threatening to become centres of strength round which many nationalistic forces gathered. Under the repressive measure of the press ordinances Lala Lajpat Rai and Sardar Ajit Singh were deported. In August 1907 the militant organ *Bande Matram* fell a victim to the relentless campaign of press prosecutions launched by the bureaucracy on the ground of its publishing a letter to the Editor under the caption of "Politics for Indians" and the official translations of the *Jugantar* articles in its issues of 27 June and 26 July respectively. The main purpose of the bureaucracy in starting this prosecution was to convict Aurobindo, the master-mind behind the *Bande Matram*. But the prosecution ended in a dismal failure to the immense frustration and rage of the whole Anglo-Indian Press. Aurobindo was evicted but the printer was convicted. Likewise the *Jugantar* printer was sentenced to two years, Bipin Pal to six months and Sushil Kumar to fifteen stripes. In 1908 prominent editors like Krishan Kumar Mitra, Aswini Kumar Dutt, Subodh Chandra Mullick and five others were detained without trial. For writing two articles in *Kesari* considered to be seditious by the alien rulers Lokamanya Tilak was imprisoned in Mandalay jail for six years. Chidambaran Pillai in Madras and Harisa Rao Hem Rao and others in Andhra were arrested. The news of these deportations, detentions and arrests was published in the newspapers, journals and periodicals, drawing the attention of politically conscious people all over India and making them ponder over the problems of national significance.

The repression made political unrest gain momentum. More and more people enlisted in the cause of nationalism. In order to suppress the newly arising national feeling it was decided by the alien authorities that fresh legislation was essential to meet the contingencies of the new situation threatening the very foundation of the alien rule in India. A new press ordinance was promulgated in 1910.³⁷ It laid down that whenever it appeared to the local government that any printing press in respect of which any security had been deposited

37. The full text of the Press Act published in *The Indian Review* (Madras, 1910), Vol. XI, pp. 117-20.

as required by Section 3 was used for the purpose of printing or publishing any newspaper, book or other document containing any words, signs or visible representations which were likely or might have a tendency, directly or indirectly, whether by inference, suggestion, allusion, metaphor, implication or otherwise, to incite to murder or any act of violence, or to seduce any officer, soldier or sailor in the Army or Navy of King-Emperor from his allegiance, or to bring into hatred or contempt the Government in British India or any Native Prince or Chief under the suzerainty of King-Emperor, or any class or section in British India, or to excite disaffection towards the said government, the local government might declare the security deposited and all copies of such newspaper, book or other document wherever found to be forfeited. Introducing the measure in the Legislative Council Sir Herbert Risley had pleaded that some effective instrument was essential to deal with a section of the people who declared open hostility to the alien rule. In his view the number of the audience believing in seditious measures was increasing daily. Hence the Act was designed to put down and prevent the growth of a political movement which aimed to subvert the alien rule and to make it impossible by terrorism.

Opposition to Repression

This repressive measure was strongly opposed by nationalist forces all over India. The enactment turned out to be a means of maintaining a section of the press in India in a state of perpetual doubt and anxiety as to when it might be called upon to deposit a very heavy sum of money as security under the Act. It seemed as if the Indian press was placed constantly under martial law. It appeared to possess none of the attributes which a law should possess. It was not considered definite and precise in its statement of what constituted a cause of action under it. It depended to a large extent on the whims of individuals in power. Hence the measure appeared to be too wide and drastic. And there appeared to be reasonable grounds for feeling that hereafter the honest and sincere journalism might be at the mercy of the executive especially when there were some Anglo-Indian officials who looked upon every Indian politician only as an agitator and in a journalist or publisher as a promoter of discontent against the prevailing exigencies. This was a preventive legislation with a vengeance.

The measure was also considered incompatible with the spirit of the Morley-Minto Reforms. Expressing his opinion on the occasion of the introduction of the Bill on 8 February 1910, Gokhale stated that it was a "cruel irony of fate" that the first important measure to come before the Reformed Council was a measure to curtail a great and deeply cherished privilege which the country had enjoyed for three-quarters of a century. It was too dangerous an instrument to be placed under the control of the executive. He emphasized that the penal code was amply sufficient to punish sedition. This new bill made the forfeiture of security from printing presses and newspapers a purely executive act. Continuing his arguments, he stated:

The air in many places is thick with ideas that are undoubtedly antagonistic to the unquestioned continuance of British rule ..and this is a feature of the situation quite as serious as anything else.³⁸

When the bill was finally put to vote and declared passed, Gokhale tried but in vain to keep the duration of the measure for three years only. Besides Gokhale there were a number of other non-official members in the Imperial Legislative Council who deprecated the curtailment of press freedom. The combination of judicial and executive function in one person appeared to be an unhealthy development of a state. In moving the resolution for amending the Press Act (of 1910) at a meeting of the Imperial Legislative Council at Delhi on 9 January 1914 Babu Surendra Nath Banerjea stated:

We journalists feel as if the sword of Democles was hanging over our heads. We may be right or we may be wrong, but that is our feeling. Ours is a noble calling and we are entitled to the whole-hearted support and sympathy of the Government. The newspapers press is the great organ for the ventilation of popular grievances, it is the safety-valve of the state,...it is the gift of British rule and we cherish it with affectionate ardour. Its liberty may degenerate into license, but I venture to hold that the arm of the law, such as

38. *Speeches of Gopal Krishna Gokhale*, n. 1, p. 403.

it is without being reinforced by the Press Act, is long enough to reach it and strong enough to deal with it.³⁹

The protest of the national leaders did not remain confined to the sittings of the Imperial Legislative Council. It was also dealt with in the annual gatherings, conferences and meetings of the various socio-political organisations. To draw the support of a large number of people over the burning problem of the day the nationalist-minded intelligentsia criticized the arbitrary use of the political power by the alien rulers. To them it appeared incompatible with the ideals of liberalism. Speaking at the annual session of the Indian National Congress held in 1913 Babu Bhupendra Nath Basu stated:

Sedition may pass, like the breath of wind and anarchy may raise its matted locks in dark and unholy corners, but that may also go, but what will not go is the impression...that a few hysterical newspapers may disturb the equilibrium of the Government of India and bring it down head over heels. And this what happened in 1910.⁴⁰

In the annual session of Congress that year a resolution for repealing the Press Act was moved and unanimously passed. The Congress reiterated its protest against its continuation on the Statute Book. It continued to express concurrently similar views in every annual session. In 1916 it placed on record its strong conviction that the Press Act of 1910 had proved a menace to the liberty of the Indian press and had hampered the legitimate expression of healthy public opinion which was so essential to good administration.⁴¹

39. *Speeches and Writings of Surendra Nath Banerjee* (Madras, G.A. Natesan, 1932), pp. 171-72.

40. *Report of the proceedings of the Annual Session of the Congress held in 1913*, p.98.

Expressing his views on the same issue, J. Chaudhuri said:

This arbitrary magisterial power...ought to be done away with. The asking for security means binding a mill-stone on a journalist's neck to start with. After this has been done his fall means but a step forward. [*Ibid*, pp. 103-4.]

41. *Report of the thirty-first Indian National Congress held at Lucknow on 26-30 December 1916* (Allahabad, 1917), p. 56.

To emphasize their standpoint speakers at the Congress quoted from Milton's *A Reopagitica* in which he proclaimed that an essential of good government was to keep it in touch with the people, that "its ear should be placed near the ground so as to hear the rumblings of the populace,"⁴² that it was the duty of the Government to see that they acted in consonance with popular hopes and aspirations. They also quoted Kautilya who laid down that a *sine qua non* of a good ruler was to keep in touch with popular sentiment everywhere. Judged from this point of view the government was not in agreement with matters affecting the administration of the country. The Press Act of 1910, conceived in a spirit of repression, had reduced the Indian press from its position as an independent critic of the government to that of an institution entirely dependent upon suffrance. Expressing his views A.C. Mazumdar stated:

The liberty of the Indian Press is practically gone and the highest tribunals in the land have declared themselves powerless to protect it. When the Act was passed the extreme regour of the measure was admitted, but an assurance was given that it would be administered with care and consideration. Whether that assurance has been honoured more in its breach than in its observance may be left to the judgment of the public.⁴³

Despite the strong opposition offered by the nationalist elements to the Press Act of 1910 there occurred no change in the political *status quo* appearing to be favourable to the alien regime. The nationalist elements kept pressing their claims through the Home Rule League and the platform of the Indian National Congress. By 1916 Tilak and Mrs. Annie Besant had become the leader of the nationalist campaign. News of all sorts, both foreign and national, was minutely censored. In addition to the laws already incorporated in the Statute Book the Government had passed the Defence of India Act in 1914 to meet any emergency arising out of the War. In May 1916 the Government exacted and forfeited a security of Rs. 2,000 from *New India*, a journal edited by Mrs. Besant,

42. *Ibid.*

43. *Congress Presidential Addresses* (Madras, G. A. Natesan, 1934), p. 1248.

and a chief spokesman of the Home Rule agitation. After a short while another security of Rs. 10,000 was demanded from the same organ. On 16 June 1917 Mrs. Besant was interned along with her colleagues Arundale and Wadia.

Mrs. Besant had been expecting action of this nature for some time. In *New India* of 15th June she published an address "To my brothers and sisters in India" in anticipation of her internment. "Unless the Government can muzzle the whole Indian Press as well as Reuter", she wrote, "The news of my internment will run round the world and proclaim how England, fighting for liberty in Europe and posing as its champion, is more false to liberty in India than she is even in Ireland, is in India an autocracy, naked and unashamed, under which neither liberty of person and speech nor possession of property is safe."⁴⁴ In the same issue of the paper Mrs. Besant published a signed article in which she discussed how to carry on the Home Rule propaganda if the League was declared to be an unlawful association.⁴⁵

44. Home (Pol.), B, June 1917, No. 438-41.

45. Ibid.

CULTURAL PROGRESS

D—The Bhagavad Gita and Karma-Yoga

*From the unreal lead us to the Real
From the darkness lead us unto Light...
Reach us through and through ourselves
And ever more protect us, ... from Ignorance.*

A popular *Sloka* from *Kathoupnishad*.

Despite the strong denunciation of self-abnegation and pessimism and the advocacy of an active approach to life by the social reformers of the nineteenth century the mass of the Indian people continued to be more or less in a state of inert stagnation. The strict regulations of the *shastras* and the *shariat*, the absence of a proper system of education, the philosophical pessimism of the cults and creeds and the undermining of values of life by centuries old monasticism and asceticism—had presented a false view of worldly life.

Moreover, to maintain their dominance of the social hierarchy the priestly classes kept infusing a negative aspect of human life. They preached *vairagya* which generated escapist tendencies. Influenced by such teachings *sanyasis* and monks became the ideals of man. Even the most rational and liberal-minded reformers showed reverence to them. The instinctive, impulsive and deep-rooted sentiment of the people was in their favour. Besides, there was also prevalent the tendency of popular beliefs and customs and an unnecessary insistence on *kismet* (luck).

All these factors had combined to make social life far from dynamic. This backwardness had perverted the beliefs of the-

Indian people in the validity of worldly existence. Life had begun to be looked upon essentially as a vice, a misery and misfortune, which could be escaped only by renouncing life itself. Thus the state of social organism continued to decay instead of progressing—retreating rather than moving forward. As late as 1915 Lala Lajpat Rai was complaining:

It is true that India is rather immobile; its masses are rather inert; and perhaps of all peoples the least affected by changes in the outside world. They have been under the benumbing influence of a philosophy of life which keeps them contended even under adverse circumstances, even when they are starving and have no clothes to hide their nakedness.¹

Foretaste for the Material Side

To free the Indian outlook from the retrogressive phenomenon of negativity it was thought essential by public leaders to inculcate and develop a foretaste for the more material sides of human life. It was considered essential by them to enlighten the people that the life was real and valuable and worthy of being preserved, prolonged and enjoyed. And that for the preservation of life each should endeavour for all and all for each. Lala Lajpat Rai wrote:

The aim of education should be to qualify the educated to think and act for himself with a due sense of responsibility toward society....The aim of education is to fit men and women for the battle of life; we do not want to convert them into anchorites and ascetics.²

Among the militant nationalists Lala Lajpat Rai was also one of those public figures who were greatly inspired by the doctrine of *Karma-Yoga*. Lalaji found his country's people helpless, ignorant and inactive. The presence of an alien power in their midst had further appeared to have aggravated this state of affairs. Since the very inception of the nationalist movement in India Lalaji had begun to take a keen interest in

1. Lajpat Rai, *Young India* (New York, B.W. Huebsch, 1916), p. 230.

2. *Ibid*, pp. 40 & 47.

its activities. He displayed great zeal to activize his own people for the cause of national progress. During his exile in Western countries he watched the life with keen interest and was enthused with activity and determination to do something with conviction to change an order which appeared to have become outmoded and static and wanting to meet the requirements of the prevailing times—things about which the majority of Indians were still unaware. To make his countrymen active and ready to struggle for the attainment of a better life he wrote:

Our people require to be assiduously and persistently taught that there is no such things as *kismet*, and that *Karma* is always controlable and managable by one's own efforts as well as by changes in one's social environment....Greater emphasis should be laid on one's ability to change, over-ride, or counteract, in a word to control his *karma*—by thought and action in this life, made possible and supported by social environments.³

Tagore's Contribution

The upholding of the cult of *Karma-Yoga* by the militant nationalists also coincided with Rabindra Nath Tagore's advocacy of the same. Deliverance lay for him not in renunciation. He was eager to live his life to the full. That is why, he never became a blind ascetic. He believed that a man should achieve his perfect success in merging his human individuality in the welfare of the common men. He, therefore, laboured all his life to serve his countrymen. He was proud to call himself the spokesman of a "defeated people". In spite of his devotion to mysticism his poems persistently proclaim that life is meant to be lived. He found the attainment of freedom in a happy worldly life. He stated:

I feel the embrace of freedom in a thousand bonds of delight. Thou ever pourest for me the fresh draught of thy wine of various colours and fragrance, filling this earthen vessel to the brim....Yes, all my illusions

3. Lajpat Rai, *The problem of National Education in India* (London, 1920), pp. 60-1.

will burn into illumination and all my desires ripen into fruits of joy.⁴

There was perhaps never a poet more of the "earth" than Tagore. In many a poem he had proudly sung the beauty and splendour of the "earth". But he also liked the "earth", perhaps all the more, for her poverty and imperfections, and also for its vitality in wordly life. He sang:

How often, great earth, have I felt my being yearn to flow over you, sharing in the happiness of each green blade that raises its signal bannner in answer to the beckoning blue of the sky;

I feel as if I had belonged to you ages before I was born.⁵

His love of life and world is again manifested in another writing. He wrote:

This world is sweet. I do not want to die.

I wish to dwell in the ever-burning life of man.⁶

Thus he pleaded for a life full of exuberance and friendship between human beings leading to the fullest expression of the inborn talents unaffected by jealous rivalries, race cults and economic or political exploitation.

Tagore had no sympathy with the religious devotees who isolated themselves from worldly existence in the lonely corners of temples and mosques. He wanted to worship his deity through action, to meet him in hard labour. In order to establish the communion of man with deity, he interpreted, the religious man had to take a share of the world burden and not try to run away from it. Deity was to be searched for and found in the hard working of daily life and not away from the haunts of man. In one of his famous poems he exhorted:

4. *Collected Poems and Plays of Rabindra Nath Tagore* (London Macmillan & Co., 1955), pp. 34-5.

5. *Ibid*, pp. 431.

6. *My Reminiscences* (London, Macmillan & Co., 1920), p. 66.

Leave this chanting and singing and talling of beads!
 Whom dost thou worship in this lonely dark
 corner of a temple with doors all shut?
 Open thine eyes and see thy God is not before thee !
 He is there where the tiller is tilling the hard ground
 and where the pathmaker is breaking stones.
 He is with them in sun and in shower, and his
 garment is covered with dust.
 Put off thy holy mantle and even like him
 come down on the dusty soil....
 Come out of thy meditations and leave aside
 thy flowers and incense...
 Meet him and stand by him in toil and in
 sweat of thy brow.⁷

Emphasizing again the significance of action Rabindra Nath Tagore wrote in 1913:

The soul finds its freedom in action.. .The more man
 acts and makes actual what was latent in him, the
 nearer does he bring the distant yet—to be.. .The Up-
 anishad says, “*In the midst of activity alone wilt thou
 desire a hundred years*”....In this field he has fought
 his mightiest battles, gained continual new life, made
 death glorious, and far from evading troubles, has
 willingly and continually taken up the burden of fresh
 troubles.⁸

The impact of such exhortations by Tagore was powerful and
 felt as widely all over the country as those of Swami Vivek-
 ananda. Of all the poets of the renaissance period under study
 he was perhaps the only person to come out so openly and so
 unequivocally for the newly emerging generation in India to
 support the cause of layman. He called upon the poet of his
 day to be like the drummer and the trumpeter eulogizing the
 worldly life to achieve the mission of his existence. He stated
 that if a poet living in this world should think of death and
 the beyond, who would serve life. Let him engage his full de-
 votion to the worldly life. The fact that life is transient and

7. *Collected poems and Plays of Rabindra Nath Tagore*, n. 4, pp. 6&7.

8. Rabindra Nath Tagore, *Sadhana* (London, Macmillan & Co., 1947, 16th ed), pp. 120-23.

short should be enough to make him realize the importance of it and nothing could be more irrational and unimaginative than to ignore it. His dramatic poem "Nature's Revenge" shows the return of a *Sanyasi* back from his communion with the infinite to the world full of desires and affections. His famous poem "Farewell to Heaven" displays how little he cares for a heaven devoid of the least touch of human emotion and how much he praises the patience of the "Earth" which through the centuries has endeavoured slowly to build its life and satisfy the needs of its people. His feeling for 'Mother Earth' find moving expression in the following lines:

Infinite wealth is not yours, my patient and
dusky mother dust!
You toil to fill the mouths of your children
but food is scarce!
You cannot satisfy all our hungry hopes, but
should I desert you for that,
Your smile which is shadowed with pain is
sweet to my eyes,
Your love which knows not fulfilment is dear
to my heart.
From your breast you have fed us with life but
not immortality, that is why your eyes
are ever wakeful....
I will pour my songs into your mute heart, and
my love into your love.
I will worship you with labour.
I have seen your tender face and I love your
mournful dust, Mother Earth.⁹

This passage itself is testimony to his intimate love for and understanding of his countrymen, especially the poorest and lowest of them who are so closely intermingled in the worldly life.

These poems were read all over the country by millions of people. Their contents inspired many of them to devote their life to the cause of national progress and to the eradication of poverty from the cells and hutments of the downtrodden masses of the country. These poems were a very powerful instru-

9. *Collected Poems*, n. 4, pp. 139-40.

ment in creating national consciousness. Through his emphasis on *Karma-Yoga* that life is not empty, nor despicable, that we should love our life and work for our country; that a man should use his life to realise and uplift the people all around him, Tagore became the embodiment of a new consciousness in the country.

Writings of Aurobindo

A reflection of the strong faith in the philosophy of *Karma-Yoga* was also witnessed in the early writings of Sri Aurobindo like *Urvasie*, *Love and Death* and, *Perseus, the Deliverer* which are not only mere poems but poems with a purpose. They reveal that selfishness is a great hindrance to the achievement of the cosmic aim and often even leaves undesirable consequences behind. Man should, therefore, endeavour his utmost to serve others, instead of solely serving his own motives. He should acquire the strength—mental as well as physical—to dedicate his life to a good aim. The new generation should not imitate the lives of the Puruoravas or Gurus who gave up everything for the sake of a charming Urvasie or of a Priyamavada and thus in order to serve their own selfish ends let down the high ideal of humanity and failed India. In *Perseus, the Deliverer*, the author displayed the Divine (Nationalist) and *Asuric* (alien) forces struggling for mastery of India and concluded by showing that the Divine must always ultimately triumph over the *Asuric* paving an assured way for the progress of humanity.

Such writings played a powerful role in moulding the outlook of the people. Gradually they became conscious of the fact that life was not meant to be renounced but that one had to work in this world and win prosperity and happiness. However, as soon as this consciousness spread, the people came face to face with the stark reality of their being enslaved by an alien power. The perpetuation of this foreign element in their midst was a big obstacle in their life. Hence they concluded that unless they could activate themselves for the attainment of national independence they would be debarred from leading a free life. In the *Shakti*, a militant journal dated 28 August 1909 there appeared:

An observation of the various objects in the universe will at once convince us that there is no life without

motion. This law applies to a country as well as to animate and inanimate nature. If it is stationary and motionless, its ruin is at hand, that motion is to a country as soul is to a body. Again, it is a law of nature that wherever there is motion there is friction, and this latter at times results in fire. Hence if a country is kept moving, friction follows, and if the speed is a little accelerated sparks ensure.

The writer continued that he was an extremist with a firm resolve to keep his country always in motion and prevent it from stagnation. Just as exercise was necessary for the proper development of the body, a country required for its complete evolution some stimulating influences to quicken its latent powers. Accordingly, with a view to adding to his country's latent powers he was accelerating its motion resulting in friction and consequent "fire". Making another simile about the hammering of iron and the active life in a nation the author continued:

My belief is that just as a piece of metal has to undergo an ordeal of fire and to be exposed to incessant hammering before it can take any shape, so if our down-fallen country will submit to similar ordeal there will come out of it a reformed and fully-developed country. Sooner or later our country will have to pass through such a state before it attains a perfect condition. Consequently, I am of opinion that instead of keeping this sword of Damocles hanging over our heads we should try to get through this anxious state as soon as possible.¹⁰

Karma-Yoga

The upholders of the new belief emphasized that the forces engaged in the task of national reconstruction will have to renounce their attachment to personal possessions and enjoyments. Instead there was to be generated a strong revolutionary passion displaying interest in the advancement of the country. It meant the foregoing of individual egoism, family

10. *Report on Native Papers published in the Bombay Presidency for the week ending 4 September 1909 (Confdl.), No. 36. p. 909.*

and class interest. In its absence there was an apprehension that confusion might prevail. Writing in the *Bande Matram* as late as 29 April 1908 Aurobindo remarked that a nation could not afford to haggle with providence or to buy liberty in the cheapest market from the Dispenser of human fate. The sooner the struggle commenced, the sooner the fate of India was fought out between the forces of progress and reaction, better for India and for the world. Delay would only waste their strength and provide opportunities to the enemy. A band of persons was required who could give up everything for their nation, whose sole thinking and action should be the stimulation of the movement by whatever techniques the moment suggested or opportunity allowed. Elaborating his standpoint he added that the devoted servants of the country would demand neither ease nor superfluities, but only their bare maintenance and "roof over their heads" to enable them to work for her. The attitude of utter self-abandonment was the first condition of success. *Sannyas*, utter and inexorable, *tyaga*, unreserved and pitiless, *Mumukshutva*, burning and insatiable, must be the stamp of the true servant of India. Academic knowledge, power of debate, laborious study of problems, the habit of ease and luxury at home and slow and tentative work abroad, the attitude of patience and leisurely self preparation were not for this era or for this nation. A sacrifice of which the mightiest *yajna* of old could only be a feeble type and far-off shadow, had to be instituted and the victims of that sacrifice were their hopes and ambitions. The greatest must fall before the deity of sacrifice was satisfied.¹¹ With incessant enthusiasm and devoted passion Aurobindo continued to exhort Indians for national mission. In one of his another writings he stipulated:

The ideal yogin is no withdrawn and pent-up force, but ever engaged in doing good to all creatures...by himself standing up in the front of humanity, its leader in the march and battle, but unbound by his works and superior to his personality....Indians, it is the Sadhana of India, *Tapasya*, *Jnanam Shakti* that must make us free and great....It is the yogin who must

11. Haridas Mukherjee and Uma Mukerjee, compiled and edited, *Sri Aurobindo and the New Thought in Indian Politics*, a collection of Aurobindo's writings (Calcutta, 1964), pp. 381-82.

stand behind the political leader or manifest within him. Ramdas must be born in one body with Shivaji, Mazzini mingle with Cavour.¹²

These writings display that Aurobindo was occupied with the ideas of service and sacrifice before his departure to Pondicherry in search of the so-called "super-man" by renouncing the worldly life. The idea of personal salvation or of individual felicity did not preoccupy his mind completely. Individual salvation, leaving his backward countrymen to their own fate, was anathema to him. He came to the conclusion that the great aim of his life lay in making his countrymen conscious of their humiliating status. Hence he decided to dedicate his life to the service of his country and the task of achieving her liberation from alien domination. So he entered active politics of Bengal in 1906 and inculcated the spirit of nationalism through his versatile and forceful editorials and articles in the *Bande Matram* and the *Karmayogin*. In one of these writings he displayed his optimism in the regeneration of India and laid down that the ideal of the *Karmayogin* was to build his nation in a new form after centuries of humiliation and degradation. He wrote:

A nation is building in India today before the eyes of the world so swiftly, so palpably that all can watch the process.... This nation is not a new race raw from the workshop of nature or created by modern circumstances. One of the oldest races and greatest civilizations on this earth, the most indomitable in vitality, the most fecund in greatness, the deepest in life, the most wonderful in potentiality... is now seeking to lift itself for good into an organized national unity.... This is the faith in which the *Karmayogin* puts its hand to the work and will persist in it, refusing to be discouraged by difficulties however immense and apparently insuperable.... We are at the building up of a nation.... We shall devote ourselves not to politics alone, nor to social questions alone, nor to theology or philosophy or

12. Sri Aurobindo. *The Ideal of Karmayogin*, a collection of articles published in the *Karmayogin*, a weekly review (Calcutta, Arya Publishing House, 1937, Fourth Edition), pp. 1-5.

literature or science by themselves, but we include these in one entity which we believe to be...the national religion....To express and execute it in life is what we understand by *Karmayoga*. We believe that it is to make the *Yoga* the ideal of human life, that India rises today by the *Yoga* she will get the strength to preserve it....This is the spirit of the Nationalism which we profess and follow.¹³

Not only in the editorials and articles of his magazine and newspaper but also from the public platforms he emphasized the significance of the new phenomenon. He was confident that Indians as men and India as their nation would make progress despite the severe repression by the alien rulers. He proclaimed most emphatically that Indians would not die but live as a nation. He added that the movement of nationalism was not guided by any self-interest, political or otherwise. Certain forces are trying to crush its rising strength. It had always happened when a new gospel was preached. But he made an emphatic prophecy:

Nationalism has not been crushed....Nationalism is not going to be crushed...whatever weapons are brought against it. Nationalism is immortal.¹⁴

In his forceful style picked up from Swami Vivekananda, Aurobindo told his countrymen to build up thoughts of removing alien domination from India. He stated more or less in an assured manner that it was the thought that built the universe. The mind alone was real. The conscious and unwavering holding of a thought could eradicate all the contradictory forces opposing the determination to be free and self-exerting. It would assist in overcoming national poverty and humiliation. He stated;

“Awake, awake, great India” is an ejaculation which, said within the mind quietly by hundreds of thousands of persons at a given hour, would produce immeasurable force.¹⁵

13. Ibid, pp. 5 & 11.

14. *Speeches of Aurobindo Ghose* (Calcutta, Arya Publishing House, 1948), pp. 10-12, 32 & 140.

15. Ibid, pp. 117-18.

Equally were the militants aware of the importance of bringing into prominence the drawbacks of Western civilization like despotism, imperialism, the forces of traditional privilege and selfish competition engaged in the economic exploitation of the colonies in the orient. Exposing this phenomenon, the militants believed, was bound to inculcate a spirit of patriotism in the politically conscious communities and classes of India. The bringing into notice of the economic competition of the western bourgeoisie and aggressive forces would play a no less significant role in alienating the sympathies of the people from the then prevailing political and socio-economic institutions in the western world. Sri Aurobindo, therefore, wrote:

•“The process of human evolution has been seen by the eye of inspired observation to be that of working out the tiger and ape. The forces of cruelty, lust, mischievous destruction, pain-giving, folly, brutality, ignorance were once rampant in humanity....We see plenty of signs of (them) in the reeling back into the beast which is in progress in Europe and America.... A determined movement of reaction is evident...no where perhaps more than in England which was once one of the self-styled champions of progress and liberty.”¹⁶

Bhagavad Gita

The patriots also found their charter of national independence in story of the *Bhagavad Gita* sanctifying the inculcation of the spirit of *Karma-Yoga*. They discovered in the book the way of self-sacrifice for reconstructing their national life. It became a gospel of action, a manual of how duty is to be performed without bothering over the consequences. In support of the cause of liberty the people continued to draw inspiration from its passages.

The incorporation of these passages in the writings and their recital in orations from the public auditorium not only assisted in sweeping of the neglect of the ancient doctrine of *Karma-Yoga* but was also acknowledged as a most vital means of creating political consciousness. These ideas actually served as an instrument in the revival of a nation having no position in the comity of world nations. They taught that life is not for the sake of life but for engaging in unending endeavours

for national progress. That the individual's action was not for self-finding and for self-fulfilment but there was hidden a powerful meaning in the *slokas* of *Gita* which exhorted the individual to struggle for the destruction of alien power. Valentine Chirol admitted:

The *Bhagvat Gita* has been impressed into the service of sedition by men who would have been as incapable of dabbling in political as in any other form of crime, had they not been able to invest it with a religious sanction. There is no more beautiful book in the sacred literature of the Hindus; there is none in which the more enlightened find greater spiritual comfort; yet it is the *Bhagvat Gita* that, by a strange perversion, the Hindu conspirator has sought and claims to have found texts that justify murder as a divinely inspired deed.¹⁷

During his enforced isolation in Mandalay Jail Tilak re-interpreted the scripture of *Gita* in modern style. His commentary gave a new and convincing assertion of the theory of *Karma-Yoga*. He propounded that the *Gita* was not a book of cold philosophy, but a guide to everyday life for all. It is a treatise on the science and art of *Karma-Yoga*. Through it he also emphasized that the *Gita* presented the ideal of action for *Lokasangrasha*, i.e. for social struggle. It was irrefutable that the individual improved only with the reformation of the world around him.

The author also displayed, with simplicity and absence of conceit, how the idealistic philosophy could be utilized for a solution of ethical and national problems. He put up before the people the practical aspect of the problems facing them and also suggested practical solutions. To those who believed that this wordly life was meaningless and if anyone inflicted injustice and cruelty on them they should go on tolerating them silently, he told that if one followed the ordinary commandments prescribed for everybody in all religions, such as "Do not commit murder", "Do not hurt others", "Act according to moral principles", "Speak the truth", "Respect your

17. Valentine Chirol, *Indian Unrest* (London, The Times Office, 1910), p. 30.

elders and your preceptors", "Do not commit theft or adultery", etc; where was the necessity of entering into these puzzling questions? But he would in reply ask them: so long as every human being in this world has not started living according to these rules, should virtuous people, by their virtuous conduct, allow themselves to be caught in the nets spread by rascals or retaliate and protect themselves? Assuming for the sake of argument that some villain had come, with a weapon in his hands to kill you, or to commit rape on your wife or daughter, or to set fire in your house, or to steal all your wealth or to deprive you of your immoveable property; and there was nobody there who could protect you; then should you close your eyes and treat with unconcern such a villain saying: "*Ahimsa Paramo Dharmah*?" or should you, as such as possible punish him if he does not listen to reason?¹⁸

And Tilak gave a definite and emphatic reply to this problem, which was indirectly a hint exhorting the people to struggle against the alien "villain" ruling their country for centuries and depriving them of their natural birthright of independent existence. He found his answer in a *sloka* of Manu quoted below, and advised his countrymen to do accordingly:

"Manu says:

"such an *atatayin*, that is, villain, should be killed without the slightest compunction and without considering whether he is a preceptor (guru) or an old man or a child or learned Brahmin." For the *Sastras* say: on such an occasion, the killer does not incur the sin of killing but the villain is killed by his own unrighte-

Of the three Bengali newspapers that began to be published soon after Bengal Partition explicitly demanding national independence—the *Sandhya*, the *Navasakti*, and the *Jugantar*—the last-named achieved the greatest popularity. It was founded in 1906 by Virendra Kumar Ghose, a brother of Aurobindo, and by Bhupendranath Dutt, only brother of Swami Vivekananda. The *Jugantar* set itself to uphold the cause

18. Bal Gangadhar Tilak, *Srimad Bhagavad Gita Rahasya or Karma-Yoga-Sastra* (Poona, 1935), pp. 42-3.

19. *Ibid*, pp. 43-4.

of national liberation as a religious even more than a political movement. Its emphasis on the outer aspect of the integral *Vedanta* contained certain progressive elements, e.g., the recognition of the reality of the material world, the high appreciation of the achievements of materialistic science. Essentially the aim of the journal's sociology was to bring *Vedanta* closer to life, to prove the equality of Indians with all other peoples. Its profession of faith can be traced in an article headed "The age of the Gita again in India". It began by quoting the famous *sloka*:

God (i.e. Krishna in the Gita) has said. "Oh, descendant of Bharta, wherever there be a decline of righteousness and the rise of unrighteousness, then I shall become incarnate again. I shall be born in every *Yug* (era) to rescue the good, to destroy the wrong doer, and to establish righteousness. In the *Dwapara Yuga* (the era which preceded the present *Kali-Yuga*, or era of darkness) when righteousness was on the wane and unrighteousness was spiring up in the sacred land of India under the hands of Duryodhana and other miscreants engaged in wickedness, then God, by becoming incarnate again and awakening his favourite disciple Arjuna to duty, re-established the kingdom of righteousness in India.

Referring to the degradation and suffering in the present age *Jugantar* lamented over the fact that through the hard grinding of their servitude, the ribs of the countless people were being broken to pieces. The paper's observation closed with a lyrical vision of the India of the future, with the independent flag of righteousness unfurled, her qualities restored, plague and famine controlled, her industries brought to the highest point of scientific development, her armies and fleets going forth to use the unlimited strength of knowledge, and righteousness of India for the benefit of the whole world.²⁰

Jugantar at the same time set forth in a series of writings the plan by which national liberation was to be achieved. These articles form a manual of directions for the army of

20. *Report on Native papers published in the Bengal Presidency for the week ending 20 July 1906 (Confdl.)*, No. 78, p. 635.

young men which is the *Nrisinha* and the *Varha* and the *Kali* incarnation of God, protecting the good and destroying the 'wicked'—the *Kali* incarnation being that in which Vishnu is to appear on earth and redeem the people from the alien domination. To eradicate slavery the first necessity was that the intelligentsia should learn to dislike servitude. Then the lower classes would soon follow their lead. It was easy, it added, to incite the lower classes to any particular work. But the incitement of the educated depended on a firm belief. Therefore, the poisonous effects of servitude must be constantly brought home, and they must always be trying to destroy the present unnatural liking for a state of servitude. The aspiration for independence must be converted into a firm resolve, and to divert the Bengalee "from the unfailing attraction of a livelihood" to the cause of freedom. Public opinion must be built up by the newspapers, "which must be filling with the discussion of the necessity of independence and revolution", by thrilling musical and theatrical performances glorifying the lives of Indian heroes and their great deeds in the cause of freedom, and by patriotic songs. "When in the Mahratta country the high-souled Shivaji stood up for independence the songs of the bards helped powerfully in his work." Above all, the material for "a great sacrifice for liberty" must be ready. "The strategems known as resorting to cover in English military tactics are very necessary in all political endeavour" and "the enemy must be kept constantly occupied by them." A *Bande Matram* procession today, a conference or congress tomorrow, a number of swadeshi speeches the day after, and so on must be done. Besides, the periodical also called upon for training and organizing the bands of young men with power to conceal secret council and to remain under complete obedience. Every band must "recognize the cultivation of physical strength as a principal means of attaining our object." Each band, working down from the chief town of the district, must be connected with other bands, and all must be initiated in the "*Shakti Mantra*", that *Shakti* worship which constituted one of the most powerful and popular appeals to the sensuous side of Hindu mysticism. The periodical advocated even the use of violent means. "The law of the English is established on brute force, and if to liberate ourselves we too must use brute force it is right that we should do so." And this doctrine of revolutionary ideal was clearly emphasized when the periodical exhorted in following terms:

Will the Bengali worshippers of *Shakti* fear from the shedding of blood? The number of Englishmen in this country is not above one lakh and a half, and what is the number of English officials in each district? If you are firm in your resolution you can in a single day bring English rule to an end. Lay down your life, but first take a life. The worship of the goddess will not be consummated, if you sacrifice your lives at the shrines of independence without shedding blood.²¹

Reassuring the people of their indomitable strength the doctrine of *Karma-Yoga* was propounded with greater emphasis when *Jugantar* of 1 February 1908 wrote:

You people possessed of indomitable power, who have forgotten your own honour, those severe austerities by virtue of which you attracted those greatmen sink into that deep meditation....Churn up the ocean of your own power and raise from it the mass of wealth which can destroy demons. You will obtain immortality. Churn the ocean of time and in its water, clear like crystal, you will find that it is from your power as subjects that the birth of Parasurama, the destroyer of Kshatriyas, took place, that it was decked with the mass of your wealth, that Sri Rama Chandra, who was affectionate to his people, came down to the world; that it was for protecting you that Ravana was killed.. Compare once this glory of your past with what you have become and what you are going to be; and you will fully realise what you will have to do now.²²

The vision of the future and confidence in the will of his people also inspired Tagore to proclaim openly:

We dead must awaken and emerge out of the meshes of fear and heaped-up abuses of life—must awaken at this hour of glorious dawn to take up our appointed place in the midst of the wide awake world.²³

21. Ibid, pp. 635-38.

22. *Report of Native Paper.....ending 5 April 1908*, No. 25, p. 219.

23. *Collected Poems and Plays of Rabindra Nath Tagore*, n. 4, pp. 34-5.

Simultaneously the poet knew that the attainment of freedom was not an easy task. Many obstacles were bound to harass the struggle for freedom. But he exhorted the people not to be afraid of them but to move ahead to the goal:

You are to travel single-handed, if doors are bolted against you in a stormy and dark night. Oh unfortunate! if lamps are not lighted, still you are to travel alone and lighting your own heart-ribs.²⁴

Influenced by the preachings of Gita there had arisen in India a new cult of Neo-Vedantism, which formed the very soul and essence of what might be called Neo-Hinduism. Judged from modern standards though the cult looked defective, yet it was certainly an advancement over the old obscurantist philosophy which had turned our country totally impotent. It had been seeking to realise the old spiritual ideals of the race not through monkish negations or mediaeval obscurantism but by the idealization and spiritualization of the concrete and actual relations of life. It demanded, therefore, a social, economic and political reconstruction of the entire indigenous fabric. Its adherents did not believe in individual murders or dacoities. They were for organized revolt, tempering with the army, raising the standards of revolt, and carrying on a guerilla war strategy. To this class also belonged Bhai Parmanand. He played a very significant role like Lord Krishna in temporarily retransforming and reactivizing Lala Har Dayal who, disappointed with the failures of revolutionaries of Savarkar era, was gradually becoming an escapist.

In the course of his stay in 1910 at the French Colony La Martinique in South America, Lala Har Dayal told Bhai Parmanand that Gautama Buddha was his ideal then.²⁵ To keep the body and soul together he used to eat something and that too, sparingly. Not to speak of condiments or chillies, even common salt was eschewed by him. For long periods in the mornings and evenings he locked himself up in a cave on

24. Tagore, *Naivadya* (Calcutta, Vishvabharati, 1362 B.S.), p. 72.

25. In *Hints* he has referred to the Buddha ten times. No other name has been given so much honour. Writes he: "Only a great prophet... can found a successful church". His *Bodhisattva Doctrine*, of course, concerns Buddhism.

the hillock and practised upon himself the austerities of a saint.

One day Bhai Paramanand put Lala Har Dayal this question: "What good will this penance of yours yield? How will it benefit you, India or the mankind? Long before this Gautama Buddha undertook many great religious exercises. But how did he help us? Looked at from one angle it paved the way for the slavery of India."²⁶

Lala Har Dayal kept mum. Bhaiji began to speak frankly: "Do you want to found a new religion? If yes, then you have already traversed a good distance. Now please go to the U.S. and do some work there. You will have proper scope in that country. Swami Vivekananda had laid the foundation of a new movement. Let alone Gautama Buddha. Make Swami Vivekananda your ideal. This ideal is badly needed by India and the rest of the world."²⁷

It would not be irrelevant to know something about the discussions the two used to conduct. Says Bhaiji: "My own view is that all the religions and creeds are a kind of fraud upon mankind. The German Emperor Frederick, the Great, mentioning the names of three of the world's greatest prophets, used to say that the world had been deceived by three great imposters, I contended that by adding one more fraud to those already existing he would only multiply the number of creeds. Would it not be much better for him to go to the U.S. and propagate the ancient culture of the Aryan race?"²⁸

What was the outcome of these deliberations. A month's stay, mutual discussions and talks had the desired effect on Lala Har Dayal. His heart began to cherish hopes again. The world, he had been forsaking and running away from, attracted him once again. After many days' discussion Har Dayal agreed that he would go to the Harvard University and in one or two years' time make it the centre of the new work. But he was not prepared to accept the conclusions of the Vedantic

26. Facts cited by Dharmavira, *Lala Har Dayal And Revolutionary Movement of His Times* (New Delhi, Indian Book Company, 1970), pp. 144.

27. Ibid.

28. Ibid.

school. "Very well," Bhai Parmanand remarked, "if not Vedanta, let it be *Samkhya* by Kapila. The main thing is to impress on people's mind the spiritual glory of Aryan Philosophy and to recall to memory the examples of self-denial of the ancient Aryan sages and saints."²⁹ (Kapila actually influenced Har Dayal. *Hints* gives proof of it.)

Muslim Awakening

The impact of the doctrine of *Karma-Yoga* also became manifest in the renaissance taking place in the Muslims of India though under a different name. The pioneer and harbinger of this new change was Mohammed Iqbal. The problem that set Iqbal thinking was not merely a religious or social one but also political. He felt that the Islamic philosophy had departed from the line demarcated by the Prophet and besides, his patriotic feelings were injured by the stark reality of the aggressive western nationalism encroaching on the existence of the East. In great anguish he watched the political scene of his day which presented a dismal, disappointing picture. Turkey was speedily advancing towards disintegration. Persia was being victimised by the imperialist rivalry of Britain and Czarist Russia. Afghanistan appeared to be no better than a vassal state. And finally, his own country, Hindustan, was not only torn by internal dissension but appeared to be backward. This gloomy picture provoked him to ponder seriously and diagnose the real cause of the evil undermining the very vitality of the social organism. His study of sociology and history assisted him in the process. He found that the elements responsible for the oriental decay and backwardness were those philosophical cults which since centuries had inculcated the mental aptitude of self-negation and self-abandonment. It was especially true in the case of Islam, felt Iqbal, which had lost its vigour and vitality as a result of the impact of the Hellenic philosophical thoughts, especially the neo-Platonic ideas. These alien impacts led to the transforming of Islam from a dynamic creed of life into a creed of pessimism and meditation, inculcating an indifference in the Muslim's outlook to life. Like Islam, the other current philosophical systems of India too played a vital role in weakening the moral fibre of the individual by teaching him to attain salvation

29. Ibid, p. 145.

of self by running away from the world in order to rid himself of his difficulties. Iqbal summarized this entire approach in the following lines:

That which is called life is naught but forgetfulness.
It is slumber, indifference, intoxication and unconsciousness.³⁰

To him the East, specially the Islamic one, was an entity without knowledge, power and creative urge. It appeared to be holding heaven in its thoughts. Worshippers in temples and mosques appeared to be emphasizing it.

A major part of what was preached under the name of mysticism appeared to Iqbal actually artificial or superficial. Its only aim appeared to mould men to renounce their active worldly existence full of stress, struggle and exertion and devote themselves in the mysticism of salvation. Such an approach led to the regarding of life as a sheer illusion. Over this decay of the Mussalman Iqbal lamented:

He that used to make sheep his prey
Now embraced a sheep's religion.³¹

The poet-philosopher was anguished over the decline of the political power of the Muslims. He stated:

They lost the power of ruling and the resolution to be independent.³²

He also referred to the physical, spiritual and moral decline of the Muslims:

Their palms that were an iron became strengthless.
Their souls died and their bodies became tombs.
Spiritual fear robbed them of courage
Lack of courage produced a hundred diseases
Poverty, pusillanimity, lowmindedness.

30. "My criticism of Plato is directed", wrote Iqbal to Nicholson, "against those philosophical systems which hold up death rather than life as their ideal systems which ignore the greatest obstruction to life, namely matter, and teach us to run away from it instead of absorbing it." Muhammad Iqbal, *The Secrets of Self* (Lahore, 1940), pp. XXII-XXIII. Also see pp. 56-7.

31. Muhammad Iqbal, trans. by R.A. Nicholson, *The Secrets of Self or Asrar-i-Khudi* (Lahore, 1940), p. 54.

32. Ibid.

The wakeful tiger was lulled to slumber
by the sheep's charm.
He called his decline Moral Culture.³³

The demoralizing doctrine came to be challenged and attacked by the leaders of Muslim renaissance. However, Iqbal was not the first philosopher to bring into light the obscurity and out-modedness of this philosophy. He was preceded by several eminent Muslim thinkers, notably Ibru-Taymiyya and Shaikh Ahmad Sirhindi. But their criticism was academic, and could not be of much help in eradicating the impressions of unityism from the Islamic body-politic. It was only with the emergence of Iqbal as a leader of Muslim renaissance and the appearance of his writing *Asrar-i-Khudi* or *Secrets of Self* in 1915, that the repudiation of the pessimist cults took place. *Asrar-i-Khudi* played a significant role in removing from Islamic thought all that was believed to be retrogressive, alien, fictitious and impure by Iqbal, leading to the decline and degradation of Islam as a temporal world power. It elaborated the doctrine of life into a powerful philosophy of action.

In this study it will not be possible to elaborate in detail all that he put in his *Asrar*. It is better to confine ourselves to some of the salient features of the concept whose central idea is available in a letter written by Iqbal to his friend, and translator of his *Secrets of Self* into English, Dr. Nicholson.

The letter starts with Iqbal's emphasis on the human ego or personality as the basic value and, really speaking, the condition of existence. He laid down that not only should an individual not renounce his ego, he should endeavour in every possible way for its manifestation in order to bring it to perfection. And this process of perfection and development of the ego is to be achieved not in some environment detached from life and matter, but through struggle and stress in the world of time and space. Iqbal goes on to state:

Life is a forward assimilative movement. It removes all obstructions in its march by assimilating them. Its essence is the continuing creation of desire and ideals,

33. Ibid, p. 55.

and for the purpose of its preservation and expansion it has invented or developed out of itself certain instruments, e.g., senses, intellect etc....In one word, *Life is an endeavour for freedom*.³⁴

Iqbal continues his letter:

That which fortifies personality is good, that which weakens it is bad. Art, religion, and ethics must be judged from the stand-point of personality.³⁵

Besides writing personal letters to his friends, Iqbal organized a regular campaign through his articles in the Muslim periodicals and journals. He exhorted there the people to adopt an active outlook towards life. A year after the publication of *Asrar-i-Khudi* appeared one of his articles in 1916. In it he wrote that the ultimate end of all human activity was life—glorious, powerful, exuberant. All human act must be subordinated to this final purpose, and the value of every thing must be determined in reference to its life-yielding capacity. The highest act was that which awakened their dormant will-force and nerved them to face the trials of life manfully. All that brought drowsiness and made the people not to look to reality around, on the mastery of which alone life depended, was a message of decay and death. There should be no opium eating in art.³⁶

Though he was greatly disappointed by watching closely the aggressive tendencies of European nationalism during his stay there, yet certain aspects of European life had created a powerful impact on him. He gained inspiration from the immense vitality and activity of those countries, the zeal of the people to take the initiative and the courage and confidence to change the order not suiting to their liking. He had a vision of the tremendous possibilities before humanity. Iqbal realized while in Europe that people could think, plan, and attain many scientific inventions and things which his own

34. The full text of the letter quoted by Prof. R.A. Nicholson in the introduction to the *Secrets of the Self*; a translation into English of *Asrar-i-Khudi* (Lahore, 1940), pp. XVIII & XXI.

35. Ibid, pp. XXII & XXIII.

36. Muhammad Iqbal, "Our Prophets ; criticism of contemporary Arabian Poetry", *The New Era* (1916), p. 51.

countrymen were not even endeavouring to attain. When he returned to India he took with him the determination to make his own countrymen active towards worldly existence and discard the repulsive doctrine of renunciation. Presenting an ideal to his people he called:

Rise, O thou who art strange to life's mystery.
 Rise intoxicated with the wine of an ideal,
 And ideal shining as the dawn....
 An ideal higher than Heaven--
 Winning, captivating, enchanting man's heart;
 A destroyer of ancient falsehood,
 Fraught with turmoil...³⁷

In *Secrets of the Self* he had discussed the dynamic relationship of a perfect individuality to its environment and gave a stirring interpretation of the role of *man* in the universe. He wrote :

Build thy clay into a Man,
 Build thy man into a World !...
 The path of life is contained in action...
 Arise and create a new world !
 Wrap thyself in flames, be an Abraham !
 To comply with this world which does not favour thy
 purposes

Is to fling away thy buckler on the field of battle.³⁸

But the most significant idea in his book was Iqbal's positive affirmation of "desire" as the most essential element enhancing the forward movement of life. He described it as "a noose for hunting ideals, a binder of the book of deeds."³⁹ And in India where it had become the most essential convention to repudiate the worldly life of desire, at least in theory if not wholly in practice, it was really a very courageous step to assert the supremacy of desire in such words:

Life is latent in seeking,
 Its origin is hidden in desire.

37. Muhammad Iqbal, n.29, pp. 26-7.

38. Ibid, pp. 88-90 and 92.

39. Ibid, p. 25.

Keep desire alive in thy heart
 Lest thy little dust become a tomb.
 Desire is the soul of this world of hue and scent.
 The nature of everything is a store-house of desire.
 Desire sets the heart dancing in the breast,
 And by its glow the breast is bright as a mirror.
 It gives to the earth the power of soaring,
 It is the *khizr* (guiding Angel) to the Moses of
 'perception.
 Desire keeps the self in perpetual uproar...
 Negation of desire is death to the living.⁴⁰

These writings of Iqbal played a very significant role in activating a large number of the intelligentsia, especially those of his community. "On its first appearance the *Asrar-i-Khudi* took by storm the younger generation of Indian Muslims. Iqbal...stirred the dead with life."⁴¹ They began to take creative interest in matters of national progress. Inspired with the zeal to do something in the socio-religio-political life of the country some of them joined the ranks of Islamic nationalism, while others became adherents to the nationalism defined by the Indian National Congress and other militant nationalist organizations which were secular in character. Appraising the contribution of *Asrar-i-Khudi* to the bringing up of the nationalist-minded Muslims Maulana Mohammed Ali wrote: "We could see that in the veins of the marble too a fiery fluid was flowing."⁴²

40. Ibid, pp. 23-5.

41. Comment by Nicholson, Ibid, pp. XXX & XXXI.

42. Maulana Mohamed Ali, *My Life: A Fragment* (Lahore, Shaikh Muhammad Ashraf, 1942), pp. 167-68.

CHAPTER VI

SOCIAL RENAISSANCE

You all know that "unity is strength" and unity can only be achieved when there is love and sympathy between the members of a society....How that love is to be created? ...There is nothing that brings people together more readily than breaking bread on the same table. It is my belief...to unite our different races together. I consider that the greatest ideal for us is to form a nationality. To attain this ideal, sentiments should be similar, and that can be achieved by social intercourse. No community can look forward for substantial progress without such intercourse and similarity of sentiments.

[Speech by The Gaekwar of Baroda in Bombay in January, 1918, The Indian Review (Madras, 1911), Vol. XII, p. 167.]

The contact with Western socio-political ideas brought about a new social consciousness among people educated through English medium. Principles like the equality of opportunity for all made a great impact on their thoughts and ideals. This powerful influence helped in generating a rational and scientific outlook towards the existing problems. Recognising this contribution of the West Aurobindo wrote:

Whatever temporary rotting and destruction this crude impact of European life and culture has caused... it awakened the desire of new creation, it put the reviving Indian spirit face to face with novel conditions and ideals and the urgent necessity of understanding, assimilating and conquering them.¹

1. Shri Aurobindo Ghose, *The Renaissance in India*, (Chandernagar, Prabartak Publishing House, 1920), p. 30. Also see pp. 31-2.

With the growth of this new consciousness the intelligentsia became intensively engaged in the movement of liberation to ameliorate the condition of their countrymen. However, these people came under strong criticism both from external as well as internal elements. They were told that while they were displaying a strong displeasure towards the political and racial supremacy of alien elements in India, there existed an equally deplorable inferiority complex in their own socio-religious sphere. It was imposed by certain advanced sections of Indian society upon backward sects and castes, though they were all kith and kin ethnically as well as traditionally. Critically examining this dichotomy of Indian life the eminent scholar Hans Kohn complained that in this situation the European nations could only look with contempt upon Indians. Thus in the struggle for emancipation which nationalism was carrying in the East, the political element was far more in evidence than the cultural and social. The political character might indeed mould the outward form of the struggle and inspire with passion but only when it attained a social and cultural character, would it acquire a greater significance.²

Because of these external pressures and in order to silence the criticism from within, and no less due to such Western writings as John Stuart Mill's essays on 'Liberty' advocating the sustenance of political freedom by social freedom, the Indian intelligentsia began to examine the Indian social structure, religions, customs and conventions. It was this inquiry that led to the growth of the modern movement of social reform popularly known as the Social Renaissance. From here onwards the socially-conscious intelligentsia acted for an equitable distribution of social power. This urgent demand made its first expression with the rise of the Brahmo Samaj Movement under the leadership of Raja Ram Mohan Roy, later to be sustained by the Ramakrishna Mission led by Swami Vivekananda, and a number of other similar movements like the Indian National Social Conference set up in 1887. The Brahmo Samaja marked, in the words of Mrs. Annie Besant, the "awakening of the Indian nation from the state of coma" produced by the East India Company, and without awakening it was natural that, confused and bewildered, find-

2. Hans Kohn, *Nationalism and Imperialism* in the Hither East* (London, George Routledge and Sons Ltd, 1932), p. 48.

ing herself helpless in the grip of a new and foreign civilization, and with the masses of her people superstitious and ignorant, divided into endless sub-divisions having no sense of unity, she should be impressed by the achievements of a strong and imperious rule, and accept silently the assertion that the West was the model to be imitated.³

The organizers of the various movements devoted themselves to the much-needed task of social propaganda all over India. In writings and speeches these social reformers pointed out that India could not remain content with the unity of a segmented but privileged fraction at the top of the social hierarchy. The various social strata would have to either ascend or descend to reach a common level. They felt and said that the superior social classes would have to be merged and identified with the lower classes, castes and strata. They were quick to realize that unless their campaign organized to wrest political privileges from the alien regime was linked with the eradicating of social evils and the introduction of radical reforms in Indian society the unnatural social stratifications generated centuries ago would prove not an insignificant hindrance to the achievement of their political goal. Hence they became the votaries of drastic change in the social set up. During the course of his Presidential Address delivered at the thirteenth Indian National Social Conference held in 1899 Rai Bahadur Lala Baij Nath pointed out:

We require not only ourselves to recognise but also to bring home to our less favoured countrymen, the fact that no society can hope to prosper where artificial restrictions or class privileges prevent individuals from putting forth their best powers both to their own and their country's advantage, where the high are prevented from sympathising actively with the low and the mean, where the standard of virtue is neither the same as it was in its own past nor what it is in the most progressive nations of modern times. We have long defied the moral law.⁴

3. Annie Besant, *India-A Nation* (Madras, Theosophical Publishing House, 1930), p. 92.

4. C.Y. Chintamani, ed., *Indian Social Reform*, a collection of original papers on social reform, the Justice Ranade's speeches in National Social Conference, and Presidential addresses at the Social Conference etc. (Madras, Thompson & Co., 1901), Part II, p. 216.

Educated people interested in the social amelioration of India were deeply pained by the bickerings and divergencies of sects and creeds. These were, in their view, eating the very vitality of the social organism. "State of Hindu Society was", lamented Lala Lajpat Rai, "bad and 'rotten'. Without necessary changes the whole social fabric was in danger of giving way and 'burning' the nation down in its debris."⁵

The weakness of Indian social life and thought induced intelligent criticism from the members of the educated groups. The anomalies of the society were glaringly limelighted. As late as 1908 N.H. Setalvad was complaining:

We are enemies of no one but ourselves if we try to delude ourselves into the belief that we are a single nation, one common throb of life animating this vast humanity... Socially we are at a very low ebb, and all our social bars are so many impediments in the path of our progress. India is divided into Hindus, Mahomadians, Christians and Parsis, and the first again with sub-castes and sub-divisions, which never fraternise. How can there even be a real unity with such conflicting diversities.... The enterprising Parsi with his womenfolk goes his own way which never crosses the path of either the Hindu or the Mahomadan who leaves his women at home to rot in neglect and ignorance of mind. Commercial ties do bring them together but they leave these ties of fraternity when their office doors close upon them.⁶

The question was posed how many of those engaged in the political agitation against the oppression of the British bureaucracy had either written, spoken or pondered seriously over their own millions of men suffering from social oppression and injustice. In such circumstances the talk of a national government with a new vision of political reconstruction for India would make them the laughing stock of the civilized world. A people with their inner life debased, their women

5. *Lala Lajpat Rai: A Collection of his writings and speeches* (Madras, Ganesh & Co., 1908), p. 158.
6. N.H. Setalvad, "Our Problems", *Indian Review* (Madras, 1908), vol. IX, p. 171.

illiterate, ignorant and they themselves suffering with outmoded prejudices and subject to the oppressively one-sided usages and customs, could never expect to take over and enjoy great political privileges and rights. All attempt in this sphere without making the inner life well developed, both morally and physically, must culminate in disappointment. Presiding over the 31st Session of the Indian National Social Conference held at Calcutta on 30 December 1917 Dr. Prafulla Chandra Roy stated:

We stand to-day on the threshold of a new era in our history as a nation. New ideas, high aspirations are pulsating in our hearts. A wave of democratic movement is spreading all over the world. It cannot be expected that India alone will remain a mere passive and silent on-looker unaffected by the time spirit..., while the echo of *Swaraj* or Home Rule is reverberating from one end of the country to the other, — while ambitious schemes of political reconstruction are being propounded by every section of the people—while gorgeous visions of a United India are capturing our imagination — loud protests of indignation are raised by classes and communities amongst us which we can no longer ignore. Why is there this note of discord?

In the view of the social reformers the fundamental defects of the whole Hindu social organism was that it adhered to the *status quo*. The perpetuation of this stagnation enabled the social set-up to avoid change as far as possible and maintain the outmoded norms of life or social conduct. But the maintenance of the *status quo* did not appear to be an inspiring ideal to the social reformers. They believed that change is the law of nature and life. An organism which does not imbibe that spirit of dynamic change and adaptation to the requirements of time became outmoded and obstructed the progress of the entire social organism. This very stagnation, in the view of these social reformers, was responsible for the political subjugation, social prostration, economic poverty, and disease. Rabindra Nath Tagore stated:

7. Prafulla Chandra Roy, "The Problem of the Depressed Classes", *Indian Review* (Madras, 1918), vol. XIX, pp. 13-4.

In her (India's) vital organs the dead weight of her social organisations ... has been fatal to her and has produced a gradual paralysis of her living nature.... The educated community of India has become insensible of her social needs. They are taking the very immobility of our social structure as the sign of their perfection, and because the healthy feeling of pain is dead in the limbs of our social organism they delude themselves into thanking that it needs no ministrations It is like a man whose legs have become shrivelled and useless, trying to delude himself that these limbs have grown still because they have attained their ultimate salvation.⁸

The movement for social reform was organised from the summit of the social structure. Nowhere was it the result of an upsurge of protest against miseries. The reason was that it was the Western educated upper middle classes which were politically conscious of their times. Besides the earnest aptitude for social progress and improvement they wanted to face the alien ruling elements by breaking their own isolationist position and by bringing with them the lower strata. Hence they desired and worked for the growth of national unity. Such an attitude was visible when Brahmins and Vaishyas began advocating the removal of untouchability. But the movement could not be intensified on an extensive scale. The activities of the social reformers mainly remained confined to their annual conferences and public addresses from time to time. However, with the emergence of political agitation against the partition of Bengal, and the swadeshi and boycott movements, reforms in the social sphere were actively taken up. For the first time the nationalist elements witnessed the strength of the masses and realized what a great role the illiterate people of the lower orders could play in intensifying the struggle for national independence. To utilize the masses on an extensive scale for their political ends they thought it necessary to speed up their advocacy of social reform.

The Servants of India Society

On 12 June 1905 was founded the Servants of India Society in the belief that if nationalism had to become a dynamic

8. Rabindra Nath Tagore, *Nationalism* (London, Macmillan & Co., 1920, Fourth ed.), p. 125.

force, the various communities, castes and sects would have to unite in a common endeavour of national uplift and give impetus to the already prevailing spirit of nationalism. The society's manifesto proclaimed:

The growth during the last fifty years of a feeling of common nationality, based upon common tradition and ties, common hopes and aspirations, and even common disabilities, has been the most striking fact; that we are Indians first, and Hindus, Mohammedans and Parsees or Christians afterwards, is being realized in a steadily increasing measure and the idea of a united and renovated India, marching onwards to a place among the nations of the World worthy of her great past, is no longer a mere idle dream of a few imaginative minds, but is the definitely accepted creed of those who form the brain of the community, the educated classes of the country....Attachment to the land of our birth, is growing into a strong and deeply cherished passion of the heart.... The results achieved so far are undoubtedly most gratifying, but they only mean the jungle has been cleared and the foundations laid. The great work of rearing the superstructure has yet to be taken in hand.⁹

The prospectus of the Society laid down:

Our essential condition of success in this work is that a sufficient number of our countrymen must now come forward to devote themselves to the cause in the spirit in which religious work is undertaken. Public life must be spiritualized. Love of Country must so fill the heart that all else shall appear as of little consequence by its side. A fervent patriotism which rejoices at every opportunity of sacrifice for the motherland, a dauntless heart which refused to be turned back from its objection by difficulty or danger....Equipped with these, the worker must start on his mission and reverently seek the joy which comes of spending oneself in the service of one's country.¹⁰

9. Text received by the courtesy of Dr. H.N. Kunzru, President of the Society.

10. *Ibid.*

These ideals played a very significant role in regenerating and renovating Indian nationalism. They laid down that national life should be considered and overhauled as a whole and not in fragmented compartments. The regeneration of India demanded not only political emancipation but also social and cultural uplift and reconstruction.

The National Social Reform Conference

The nationalist elements also started taking active interest in the programmes of the Indian National Social Reform Conference, an organisation parallel to the Indian National Congress though the field of activities was quite distinct. While the Indian National Congress primarily focussed its attention on various political reforms the Indian National Social Reform Conference was endeavouring to unify Hindu society through social reform. The founder of this organization was Mahadev Govind Ranade whose services to the growth of nationalism and the zeal for social change were of profound significance. Inspired by the zeal and enthusiasm of Ranade there came to join the movement prominent personalities like Sayaji Rao Gaekwar of Baroda, Telang, Chandavarkar, Raghunath Rao and others. All these leaders pointed out they had been introduced to a new civilization which had gained ground in the country and it would be well for them to keep their country in order. They owed a duty to themselves and to the nation. In order that Indian society might grow according to new ideas social reconstruction was essential. The swelling feeling of patriotism which had affected all Indians alike demanded that they should place before themselves a definite ideal of Indian nationality. Political progress and the maintenance of sound democratic ideas were simply incompatible with perpetration of social prejudices as they prevailed in the days of their forefathers. At the annual meeting of the Indian National Social Conference held on 28 December 1919 at Amritsar Sir Narayan Chandavarkar stated:

The age calls for equality of opportunity for all, high and low, rich and poor. Democracy is more a social, than a political force and must find, to be healthy, its life first in our home life and social life to make our

political and industrial life wholesome. That is the call of the times to us from the spirit of age.¹¹

Welcoming the delegates at the thirteenth Indian National Social Conference Pandit Manohar Lal Zutshi urged that national efficiency should be the central idea of the social reform propaganda. Preference to social feeling over sectional selfishness should be the fundamental dictum of all social reform programmes. He appealed for raising the standards of the depressed classes, and the abolition of early marriage and enforced widowhood. He stated further:

A study of Indian History shows that while the Hindus have not lacked the individual virtues, while they have been second to no other community in, for instance, integrity, courage, generosity and personal devotion, they have been lacking woefully in social virtues, in public spirit and natural cohesion, and in my humble opinion their downfall may be ascribed in no small measure to this great national defect.¹²

The resolutions passed at the annual sessions of the Social Conference emphasized the need to improve the conditions of the depressed classes and the relaxation of caste restrictions and to organize work in social reform like approving monogamous marriage and widow remarriage, post-puberty marriage, and the start of inter-caste marriages.

The Caste System

The social reformers felt that the greatest hindrance to all round national progress lay in the institution of caste among Hindus. It fostered exclusive and centrifugal tendencies in the social organism whatever advantages it might have conferred on Hindu society in ancient times. It prevented the growth of genuine social solidarity and produced strong complexes and feelings of superiority and inferiority. The whole gradation from Periah to Brahmin was an element of injustice, splitting

11. Summary Report published in the *Indian Review* (Madras, 1920), vol. XXI, p. 32.

12. Summary Report of the Proceedings appearing in the *Indian Review* (Madras, 1917), vol. XVIII, p. 18.

men, equal by nature, into fractions based not on the natural standard of personal qualities but on the basis of birth. This separateness had inspired persons to help only the members of their particular caste. This meant nepotism. Besides, nothing could be more injurious than the fact that the various delegates at the annual conferences required separate kitchen arrangements for everybody. It justified the famous saying that 12 Rajputs must have 13 cooking pots. Thus caste had been an instrument utilized by the enemies of progress. In 1916 Manohar Lal Zutshi stated:

Caste, as we see it today, is the greatest monster which we have to kill. And when I say this I do not merely mean the outward forms of caste, though these are bad enough in all conscience, but even more than those, its inner spirit, which makes every Hindu, sometimes in spite of himself, think in terms of caste. It is this anti-national spirit of pride and exclusiveness which we must destroy and replace with the sense of man's duty to man irrespective of birth and rank.¹³

In one of its early annual sessions in a resolution on the caste system the Indian National Social Conference called upon the leaders of the Hindu Community to take practical steps to introduce inter-dining and inter-marriage among the various sub-sections of the leading castes in India with a view to promoting the growth of a feeling of solidarity amongst Hindus in all parts of India.

Besides the workers of social organizations the leaders of the Indian National Congress had also started taking interest in the unification of Hindu society. The exigencies of the political situation impelled them to criticize and disapprove of the existing social, caste, religious and racial distinctions. They pointed out the uselessness of the distinctions with the introduction of the new capitalistic system whereby economic necessity had compelled the members of the upper classes to adopt professions formerly confined to the lower classes only. Addressing the Bengal Provincial Conference C.R. Das stated:

In our social structure of today, there is not the slightest "Varanasram Dharma" of which the shastras tell

us: our Brahmins have given up their Brahminical vocation: they are clerks, lawyers, barristers, judges, owners of shoe stores, lessees of distilleries: they are adepts in the blundering reception of mispronounced texts but of the shastras they know little and care less. As it is with Brahmins so it is also with Baidyas and Kayasthas! Then why should these people boast of their Brahminism and Baidyaism and Kayasthaism.... We boast of our Hinduism, but with our false pride of caste, we are stabbing Hinduism at its source.¹⁴

Like the leaders of the Indian National Congress important figures in the Hindu Mahasabha had also started thinking in terms of introducing changes in the institution of caste. Despite the fact that in pleading this change they were mainly motivated by the idea of consolidating Hindu society against the other religious communities, their attempt was progressive one at least from the Hindu point of view. Complaining against the rigidity of the caste system in his welcome address delivered in the meeting of the Hindu Sabha in 1918 the Maharaja of Kassimbazaar stated:

While caste was intended in ancient India as a social insurance, it has degenerated in our day into a school of endless bitterness and hostility....Today it preaches the gospel of hate and cramps individuality....We seem to have gone very far away from the spirit of times which established caste in its original sense.¹⁵

Imbued with the progressive spirit of patriotism the national leaders appeared to have made a realistic endeavour to modify the old spirit of caste exclusiveness. They pleaded ardently in their public speeches and writings that since the demand for self-rule and national independence was based on democratic principles the Indian people should also democratize their social relations and reconstruct the existing social organism on democratic doctrines such as equality, liberty and human rights. The theme of national progress could not

14. *Deshbandhu Chittaranjan Das*, A Collection of speeches (Calcutta, Rajen Sen & B.K. Sen, 1926), pp. 61-2.

15. The Maharaja of Kassimbazaar, "Caste: Then and Now", *Indian Review* (Madras, 1918), vol. XIX, p. 151.

be made by keeping side by side narrow compartments. Gokhale stated in 1907:

I want our men and women, without distinction of caste, of creed, to have opportunities to grow to the full height of their stature, unhampered by cramping and unnatural restrictions....The situation requires us to devote ourselves to the service of our Motherland in an earnest and self-sacrificing spirit....In working for India, we shall be working for the land of our birth, for the land of our fathers, for the land of our children....And if we do this...our Motherland will yet march onwards and again occupy an honoured place among the nations of the world.¹⁶

The intelligentsia also appealed for unity, friendship and toleration. The school, the college and the court were to be open places for all to enter, regardless of caste, colour and creed. Even in other social matters, the line of differentiation should be thinned with a view to its ultimate disappearance, till religious belief became a matter of an individual's concern.

The Depressed Classes

More acute than the problem of castes in Hindu social organism was the problem of the depressed classes. Any endeavour to ameliorate their condition in the past was frustrated by the priestly castes who were unwilling to negate the modification of *Shastras* and *Puranas* or to disturb the course of Hindu life built up by their ancestors. However, with the beginning of the Hindu social renaissance the depressed classes problem was frequently and earnestly discussed by the socially well-placed and politically conscious intelligentsia. In their writings and speeches at the meetings and conferences they said that to remain indifferent towards the problem of depressed classes was highly incompatible with general norms of national progress. The principles which impelled the higher classes and castes to ask for political justice for themselves should actuate them to display social justice to the lower cla-

16. *Speeches of Gopal Krishna Gokhale* (Madras, G.A. Natesan and co., 1920, 2nd ed.), pp. 1104 & 1134.

sses. Only then would they be judged fit to attain the objects of their national desire. A.B. Subedar, a social reformer, pointed out :

The movement for the elevation of the Depressed classes is a composite movement of civilization and of progress, and is a very important manifestation of that stir for national regeneration, which has already begun....There can be no substantial or lasting progress of society as a whole unless it affects all classes. The elevation of the Depressed classes will supplement the general movement and give it reality, solidity and strength. The efforts for improving the condition of the backward classes, is only a phase of that new spirit in a national life which seeks to express itself in many forms.¹⁷

A prominent advocate of the elevation of the depressed classes was the Gaekwar of Baroda who professed advanced liberal views in the socio-political sphere. He was deeply moved by the degraded social and economic conditions of these people and determined to change the forcibly created social stagnation. Exhorting his countrymen to overcome these artificial social obstacles to unity he stated:

While other countries regard a large population as a source of strength we deliberately refuse to use as a national asset one-sixth of our number....Here in India we are committing the greater crime of National Suicide....Surely it is time that we should take steps to join hands with these untouchable millions and so be able to claim justice, respect and influence as a united people.

After a strong argument against the theory of "untouchableness" and against the intolerance of the upper classes the Gaekwar urged not only Hindus but the Government as well the duty of eradicating in all earnestness this social vice. He stated that a Government within easy reach of the latest thought, with unlimited moral and material resources, such as

17. M.B. Subedar, "The Elevation of the Depressed Classes", *Indian Review* (Madras, 1909), vol. X, pp. 749-50.

there was in India, should not remain content with simply asserting the equality of men under the common law and maintaining order, but must sympathetically see from time to time that the different sections of its subjects are provided with ample means of progress. The declared policy of the Government of India to let the social and religious matters of the people alone except where questions of grave importance were involved, could never be appreciated by the forces of national reconstruction.¹⁸

The social reformers emphasized that the modern era was the era of brotherhood; that the world was moving rapidly towards the realization of the great ideals. The technological and industrial advancement of the time was demanding from the advanced classes the establishment of closer affinity with the poor. It had become the cardinal canon of the progress of human civilization. They also pointed out that the national regeneration of India depended to a significant extent on the establishment of social efficiency marking no difference between the lower and upper classes. The lower classes must be raised in the scale of intellectual and social life to occupy their proper place in the social hierarchy before Indians could call themselves a nation. Lala Lajpat Rai observed:

At present they are nowhere. They are with us, it is true that they are not of us. Their fidelity is being put to a severe strain and unless we recognize the justice and humanity of their cause and recognize it in time, no blame could attach to them if they were to separate themselves from us and join the ranks of those who are neither with us nor of us.¹⁹

The reformers also appealed to their countrymen especially those of the upper classes, to remove the barriers of bigotry, arrogance and superficial pride in the higher gradations of their social existence. They exhorted them to permit the downrodden people, like washermen and barbers, to progress according to their talents and intellectual merits with no un-

18. "The Depressed Classes", *Indian Review* (Madras, 1909), vol. X, pp. 881-87.

19. Lajpat Rai, "The Depressed Classes", *Indian Review* (Madras, 1910), vol. XI, p. 336.

natural obstacles in their way and with proper arrangements for their education.

They also pointed out that due to the penetration of these social discrepancies in their society they were left far behind in the race of human progress when their position was reviewed in the context of aggregation. The sum of their national power could never be large as long as a big portion of their population was held as untouchable. In order to build up a new civilization and give the whole Indian social organism a new vitality the reformers exhorted their countymen to eradicate the oppressive traditions of social exploitation and to foster a sense of human freedom. In this transition of Hindu society from medieval into modern form the reactionary values would have to be removed. Only by the pursuance of such benevolent policies would India be renovated. And only then could there take place real reconstruction of Hindu society. Addressing the meeting of the Depressed Classes Conference in 1913, Lala Lajpat Rai also pointed out:

The higher Hindu Society to-day lives under the same degenerating influences as the early slave owners did.... Unless we are prepared to respect fellow-men and treat all as 'persons' we are only sowing the seeds of the destruction of our own self-respect and dignity. It is to be remembered that national decline has its origin in oppression upon others, and if we Indians desire to achieve national self-respect and dignity, we should open our arms to our unfortunate brothers of the depressed classes and help to build up in them the vital spirit of human dignity....We are to-day being pressed down by the dead-weight of the ignored Depressed Classes. We must float or sink with them. In their strength is our strength and in their weakness our fall.²⁰

At the same Conference Sir Ramakrishna Gopal Bandarkar pointed out in his Presidential address:

We have intercourse with people of all classes and all countries. We do not consider any of them untoucha-

20. Lajpat Rai, "The Depressed Classes", *Indian Review*, (Madras, 1913), vol. XIV, p. 336.

ble. Is it then right to brand as untouchable our own fellow-countrymen with whom we have had intercourse for 3000 years, with whom as a matter of fact we actually have close relationship in one way or another.²¹

In 1914 came World War I. It released new forces and generated a new outlook. Political as well as social reformers started thinking of social problems as an integral part of the national life and, hence, of deserving full attention. For the first time in its history the leaders of the Indian National Congress began to display an active interest in the social amelioration of the Depressed Classes. Till 1917 the Congress leaders, including some of the most genuine and illustrious social reformers like Dadabhoy Naoroji, Badruddin Tyabji, W.C. Banerji and Surendra Nath Banerjea kept all questions of a religious and quasi-religious character outside the deliberations of the Indian National Congress which was established for constitutional political agitations. Any attempt to change the social position of the Depressed Castes was unavoidably linked with religion and socio-religious customs. This policy was altered in 1917. The Indian National Congress of that session adopted a definite resolution urging upon the people of India the necessity, justice and righteousness of removing all disabilities imposed by custom upon the Depressed Classes, the disabilities being of a "most vexatious and oppressive character subjecting those classes to considerable hardships and inconvenience."²² A number of delegates addressed the gathering on this resolution and limelighted the phenomenon calling it a standing reproach to Indians. During the course of his speech M. Asaf Ali complained :

It seemed a cruel irony of fate that those who were vociferously clamouring for the attainment of preservation of human rights themselves were so little mindful of the legitimate rights of others *under them*. Was it just or fair that a mute section of humanity should be left to suffer the very wrongs for whose redress others were shedding their blood in the battlefield. Why,

21. Ibid, p. 484.

22. *Report of the XXXII session of the Indian National Congress held on 26-29 December, 1917* (Calcutta, 1918), p. 128.

even the 'untouchables' in spite of all that cruel custom had subjected them to, were human beings and children of the soil, in whose veins coursed the self—same 'red-blood' as in the veins of those who arrogated superiority to themselves. The depressed classes... could not be debarred from the birthright of man.²³

Further, he pointed out that if the nationalists were justified in hurling severe criticism against the alien bureaucracy, would not the Scheduled Classes be equally entitled to condemn the upper castes, from which most of the nationalists hailed, for the injustice inflicted upon them since centuries. He continued :

There were many millions of these victims of misfortune who had been plying their degraded trades in utter muteness for thousands of years, never emerging from the abyss of degradation into which the cruel and utterly unjustified customs of the country had hurled them. Whether it was the spring-time of hope, or the summer of realisation to others, to these unfortunate creatures it was always the winter of black despair.²⁴

Other speakers compared their backward condition with the shackles of a nation and said that unless these shackles were removed no definite progress could be made. Was it not highly incongruous that one could be a political democrat and social autocrat simultaneously? The existence of this anomaly was nothing less than an insult to Hinduism. A delegate to the Congress session, Rama Iyer, observed :

They (depressed classes) are the foot of the nation and if you and I would climb the hill of Home Rule, we must first shatter the shackles on our foot and then only will Home Rule come to us....Remember that a man, a social slave, cannot be politically a free man.²⁵

Even Lokamanya Tilak's outlook on social matters had undergone radical change by 1918 due to the action and interaction of a number of political and social forces and factors.

23. Ibid, p. 131.

24. Ibid, pp. 130-31.

25. Ibid, p. 130.

This change marked a definite departure from what he had upheld strongly in the early phase of his public career. His social conservatism had changed into radical social reform. Addressing a special session of a conference for untouchables in Bombay in 1918 he is reported to have stated :

If God were to tolerate untouchability I would not recognize Him as God at all....Although I have appeared amongst you in person for the first time, believe me, you have been in my mind all the time....I do not deny that it was the Brahman rule that introduced the practice of untouchability. This is a cancer in body of Hindu society and we must eradicate it at all costs.²⁶

Besides Tilak there were a number of national leaders who were taking keen interest in the amelioration of the Depressed Classes in their respective provinces. Most prominent among them were Mahatma Gandhi and C.R. Das. Presiding over the one of the annual gatherings of the Bengal Provincial Conference the latter dealt in detail with the social problems including that of the Depressed Classes. He exhorted :

In our oppressed and downtrodden fellow brethren let us recognize the image of *Narayana*, let us abandon all false pride of birth and breed and let us bend our heads in reverence and true humility. These seething millions of your land—be they Christians or Mahomedans or Chandals—they are your brothers; embrace them as such, co-operate with them and only then your labours be crowned with success.²⁷

At its second annual meeting held at Calcutta on 30 and 31 December 1919 the Moderates Conference drafted a programme of constructive work which pleaded for the amelioration of the condition of the backward classes and improvement of the prevailing condition of the labour and the housing of the poorer classes.²⁸

26. S.V. Bapat, ed., *Reminiscences and Anecdotes About Lokamanya Tilak* (Poona, Sadashiv Vinayak Bapat, 1925), pp. 204-5.

27. *Chitta Ranjan Das*, n. 14, pp. 62-3.

28. Summary Report of the second annual meeting of the Moderates Conference in December, 1919, published in *Indian Review* (Madras, 1920), Vol. XXI, p. 26.

The central theme of the preachings, speeches and orations of all these national social reformers was that national progress could not proceed in compartmental autonomy, that political freedom could not thrive unless it was accompanied by economic and social equality. After all, to the masses political freedom was not and could not be an end in itself. It was only a means to acquiring social and economic justice. Furthermore, they also stated that in order to expand the nationalist movement the integration of Indians belonging to various castes, communities and classes on democratic lines was highly essential. Then and then only could the political goal be achieved. Even Hindu leaders like Savarkar, who stood for Hindu Raj, pleaded the cause of the low caste people. They were afraid and alarmed by the numerical loss suffered by the Hindu community due to the speedy conversion of the untouchables to Islam and Christianity. They appealed to the entire Hindu community to raise the *Sudra* Classes to a position of spiritual power and social importance almost equal to that of Brahmins. The main idea behind this emphasis and protest was to humanize and nationalize society.

Unlike the former social reformers of the sixteenth, seventeenth and even eighteenth centuries each one of the new reformers departed from the conventional Brahmanical way of expressing his socio-religious and philosophic views in Sanskrit. They adopted the spoken languages of the masses in their writings, public addresses or seminar discussions and debates. This technique had a tremendous impact upon the masses. It appealed directly to the core of their feelings and sentiments. This was another powerful master instrument in arraying the masses, especially those coming from the lower caste families, in the struggle for national liberation.

To elevate the status of the Depressed Classes the leaders of the renaissance adopted still another technique. They reminded the people of the contribution made in the past by people who would trace their descent to no decent environment, the *rishis* and saints like Vishwamitra, Valmiki and Guheka of Chunar.

Women

Along with the problem of Depressed Classes the question of women was equally acute. Due to illiteracy, ignorance and

superstition they had been prevented from being equal participants in the socio-political life of the country. In comparison to the 18 per thousand ratio of men, about 4 per thousand of women were permitted to acquire education. The social laws were equally strict in the case of widow-remarriage. They condemned them to a lifetime of misery, enslavement and social corruption and demoralization. In his welcome address in the meeting of Hindu Sabha in 1918 the Maharaja of Kassimbazaar stated :

It is no good shutting our eyes to the fact that the ignorance of our women folk has made the name of India a bye-word of contempt and reproach to the civilized world for a number of centuries and paralysed and atrophied sin in body politic even beyond Asiatic somnolence....Our decadence as a people is due not a little to our having forsaken the golden rules of ancient life, and in this line we could do nothing better than to see our womanhood dignified.

Recalling their past glories the speaker reminded the people of the remarkable contribution made by them in the development of modern culture and civilization. He stated that it was also conveniently forgotten that, at one time in the history of this ancient land, some of the best hymns of the Rig Veda were composed by the women of India and that at a later stage quite a significant number of them distinguished themselves in the study of mathematics, in the governance of kingdoms and in the field of battle. He said :

Gargi, Maitrey, Khana, Lilavati, Sita, Savitri, Damayanti, Tara, Draupadi, Shakuntala, Padmini, Sanjukta, Rukhmini, Durgawati and Ahalya Bai—where is the country or the people that would not feel proud or honoured to have daughters like these.²⁹

The Brahmin Domination and Religious Oppression

Besides the amelioration of the social conditions of Indian women it was the talent of the sometimes corrupt and selfish priestly class which built a great superficial superstructure of

29. The Maharaja of Kassimbazaar, "Caste then and Now", *Indian Review* (Madras, 1918), vol. XIX, pp. 149-51.

conventionalities and formalities with a paraphernalia of ritual and ceremonial by which the true spirit of religion was practically lost and could no longer be an inspiring ideal. And it was the submergence of the true spirit of ancient Hindu faith under the burden of convention that impeded the growth of national unity. It created social cleavage resulting from the strict rules of caste, the unchangeable marriage laws, the social ostracization of the Depressed Castes as untouchables, the ban on the remarriage of the widows, the propagation of groundless superstitions. It provided social rules for lavish expenditure on the occasion of marriages and funerals.

To eradicate these religious vices the social reformers called upon the politically and socially enlightened classes to eradicate the domination of the Brahmins, purify religion and not to allow them to interfere with the collective progress. The Gaekwar of Baroda pointed out:

Millions have in the past been driven by this treatment to desert Hinduism for the Crescent and the Cross. Thousands are doing so every year.... The religion which commands the trampling down of millions of our fellows into perpetual ignorance, and consequent vice, disease and misery, is a false one.... Let us as a nation take warning from history. No country which has remained under the domination of priestly class has ever thrived.... There is no room in the world of today for such priests as are little gods with an exaggerated idea of their own importance insisting on their infallibility, content with ignorance and contemptuous of knowledge. Priests of this kind are a drag on the wheel of progress. Instead of ministering to the people, they are their bad angels.³⁰

The Preference to Individualism over Collective Spirit

However, the problem was not confined to the relationship between the various castes, communities, religions, and classes. It was more than that. The social reformers discovered that the tendency of the traditionally prevailing Hindu beliefs

30. The Gaekwar of Baroda, "The Depressed Classes", *Indian Review* (Madras, 1909), Vol. X, p. 886.

had a greater leaning towards individualism, which appealed more to the interests of the individual than to those of the society to which the believer belonged. Thus the Hindu social structure appeared, broadly speaking, like an individualistic phenomenon caring very little for social organism. But seeking of obligations and remaining quite apathetic towards the aggregate structure was a misnomer and a "lever without a fulcrum", believed the social reformers. Lala Lajpat Rai complained:

When I accuse the Hindus of want of faith, I do not mean *individual faith*, but that *social faith* which is the parent of victory, the faith that arouses the multitudes; faith in their own destiny, in their own missions and in the mission of the epoch; the faith that enlightens and bids men advance fearlessly in the way of...humanity with...their future progress as their goal. It is such a faith that we have been wanting in since the time of Buddha and it is such a faith that we require to become a nation again.³¹

To eradicate the social drawback of selfish individualism the reformers exhorted the people to develop a state of things in which endeavour should also be made to generate and foster a spirit of conciliation between the interests of the individual and those of society. To develop a collective social outlook the social reformers told the people that the keynote of Vedic and Buddhistic religions was sacrifice of each for all. The individual interests were subordinated to those of all the people living within a certain social framework. In the peroration of his article "The social genius of Hinduism" Lala Lajpat Rai exhorted his countrymen to develop the collective spirit of nationalism instead of sectarianism, by quoting a passage from Chanakya's *Niti Sastra*:

Sacrifice a member for the sake of the family, a family for the sake of a village, a village for the sake of a district and even the earth for the welfare of the soul.³²

31. *Lala Lajpat Rai*, n. 5, p. 135.

32. *Ibid*, p. 136.

To overcome the traditional deficiencies of individual selfishness the nationalist-minded intelligentsia also appealed to the Indian people to radically change the social values and cultural patterns inherited centuries ago. In their view these values and behaviour patterns tended to upset the smooth sailing of Indian life in the wake of new values and newly evolved regulations of human conduct. Some of them endeavoured to make the people remember the existing bonds of traditional amity and mutual understanding which would assist greatly in forging the ties of unity. Under the caption "How to unite" the *Bande Matram* dated 16 October 1908 commented that India was hallowed by associations which had inculcated a progressive broad social outlook. These associations could be a powerful instrument by which the antagonism prevailing between different isolated societies and communities ceased to manifest itself. It wrote:

Residing together on the same place for centuries with associations coming down from the distant forefathers is no weak bond of unity. It tends to eliminate our divergence and convert us into a common type. We are, therefore, at loss to understand why there should not be a strong sense of love kindred between the different communities living in India. Is not the fact that we all live in India, draw our sustenance from her soil, breathe her air and are in many other ways bound to her, calculated to fill us all with patriotic sentiments and lead us to do and dare for the welfare and greatness of that country to which we all belong?³³

The Problem of Precedence

But there was the other side of the picture too. In pursuit of political freedom nationalism, as already stated, minimised and sometimes totally ignored the serious defects, and imperfections creeping in the Indian social structure. The problem of reforms, which were vitally essential to maintain the well-being of social set up, was forgotten. This attitude, prevalent in certain sections of the nationalists, directly opposed the view of those who pleaded for social amelioration.

33. *Selections from the Bande Matram* (Benaras, Swaraj Publishing House, 1922), p. 39.

Now, it is a matter of common knowledge that due to the growth of these two antagonistic phenomena there developed a somewhat acrimonious controversy. The question posed at the public forums, auditoriums and seminars was whether political reform should precede social reform or *vice versa*. The upholders of the *status quo* laid down that they had been putting the main stress on the necessity of political freedom almost to the exclusion of the other needs of the nation, not because they were not alive to the vital importance of these needs of economic renovation, of education, of social transformation, but because they knew that in order that their ideal of equality may be brought to its fullest development, they must first bring about the political freedom and federation of the country. And those who plead the other way round, were the "victims of Anglo-Indian hypocrisy". Their reasoning was opposed to the positive testimony of history. Let them not forget that first of all people were in need of a sound, healthy and extensive system of education, the impartiality of whose culture would not be disturbed by the need of creating an ideal loyalty to an alien despotism. A free and unfettered informing of people's mind with the best thought of the age was the only means of bringing into being a spontaneous desire for social reform. In India where the people at the moment had to commit their destinies to the aliens and could not claim the legitimate and elementary right of governing themselves they could hardly be moved by any philanthropic and humanitarian impulse to do their best to lessen the sufferings of their fellow beings.³⁴

At another time these nationalists pointed out that they did not believe that by altering the machinery so as to make their society the carbon copy of the West they would effect social renovation. Widow remarriage, inter-marriage, inter-dining and the other issues of the social reform were mechanical alterations which, whatever their merits or demerits, could not by themselves keep the nation alive or check the course of degradation and decline.

Since its inception important persons in the Indian National Congress were indifferent to social reform. They were

34. Comment by Aurobindo, Haridas Mukherjee, compiled and ed., *Sri Aurobindo and the New Thought*, a collection of Aurobindo's writings with a short biographical sketch (Calcutta, 1964), pp. 101-03.

cajoled into attending its sessions before 1917 with the plea that the discussion on social questions would be excluded from the deliberations to avoid the internal dissensions. It was Lokamanya Tilak along with his other militant nationalists who openly stood out for the concept of harnessing social prejudices to the cause of national independence.

Bal Ganga Dhar Tilak entered upon his public career with certain definite orthodox social views.³⁵ It was his firm conviction that so much emphasis should not be laid on the problem of social reforms that it could obstruct the movement for political freedom. In his view the political movement for national independence was the pressing need of the people. It could not afford the luxury of splitting itself up into warring factions and creating animosities by premature association of the social reforms question with politics. He felt that the great need of the country was political autonomy and to attain the same, it was highly essential to rouse the pride and self-confidence of the people in themselves and to concentrate all the forces of nationalism on the single object of political freedom. Because, without unity of purpose the mission itself could not be achieved. Once political independence was achieved, the way would automatically be opened, through the gradual education of the people, for a reformatory outlook which would ultimately do away with social evils like untouchability, early marriages, female illiteracy and backwardness. He strongly contended that the absence of political independence was the root of all the vices penetrating the body-politic of India. Aurobindo Ghose, who held more or less similar views on the question interpreted Tilak's approach in his introductory note to a collection of his speeches, in the following words:

35. From the writings and speeches delivered by Tilak in the early phase of his political career, it appears that in his personal life he pursued all the orthodox social practices and showed himself to be an adherent of social conservatism. Though during his college days the study of Mill and Spenser made him inclined towards the usefulness of agnosticism, yet he did not give up his orthodox approach. The weight of his judgement and critical appraisal fell in favour of the maintenance of the caste system. His social conservatism reflected in the vigorous campaign started by him in 1890 against the promulgation of the age of consent bill which aimed at enhancing the age of consummation of marriage for Hindu girls from 10 and 12 years. Similarly the establishment of the 'Cow Protection Society' was another way of emphasizing the orthodox Hindu's view of life.

The proper time for that, a politician would naturally feel, is when the country has a free assembly of its own which can consult the needs or carry out the mandates of the people. Let us have first liberty, and the organized control of the life of the nation. Afterwards we can see how we should use it in social matters; meanwhile let us move on without noise and strife, only so far as actual need and advisability demand and the sense of the people is ready to advance.... A subject nation does not prepare itself by gradual progress for liberty; it opens by liberty its way to rapid progress. The only progress that has to be made in the preparation for liberty is progress in the awakening of the national spirit and in the creation of the will to be free and the will to adopt the necessary means and bear the necessary sacrifices for liberty.³⁶

To avert the split within the political movement even Babu Surendra Nath Banerjea at certain stages compromised with Tilak's group. He refused to preside over one of the annual sessions of the National Social Conference for which he was president-elect. He believed that the *raison d'être* for excluding social questions from their deliberations was that if they were to take up such questions, it might lead to serious differences ultimately culminating in a schism, and it was a matter of the foremost importance that they should prevent a split. The request of the other side was very unreasonable; but they had sometimes to submit to unreasonable demands to avert greater evils.

However genuine and sincere Tilak and his colleagues might have been in their political outlook, their very opposition to social reforms was bound to alienate the support of the low-caste people, a considerable section of women and social reformers to the cause of national independence. Though for the politically enlightened classes independence meant a struggle against the alien regime, to the backward classes it was a struggle against the advanced classes who were conservative and orthodox in their social outlook. The struggle for political liberty satisfied the demands raised by the small elite pos-

36. *Bal Gangadhar Tilak: His Writings and Speeches* (Madras, Ganesh & Co., 1922), p. XV.

sessing an orthodox outlook in social matters. But for the backward masses, real liberty could come only through the practice of social reforms eradicating the social "tyranny" imposed by the advanced classes. When these backward masses also became politically and socially conscious the limitations of the revivalist movement led by Tilak became clear indeed. Hindu revivalism thus proved to be a good servant but a bad master.

In reply to the faiths, beliefs and arguments put forward by the orthodox nationalist leaders the upholders of social reform pointed out that foreign domination itself was the result of the essential weakness of the Hindu social structure, and unless this weakness was rooted out or remedied the achievement of political freedom would be next to impossible. If somehow it was achieved, it would be difficult to maintain.

In this heated controversy the social reformers argued that there existed an inter-dependence between the two. And this inter-dependence conditioned the opening of a programme of social reforms along with the demand for political rights from the alien regime. In his address to the first Indian National Social Conference held in Satara, Mahadev Ranade observed:

You cannot have a good social system when you find yourself low in the scale of political rights, nor can you be fit to exercise political rights and privileges unless your social system is based on reason and justice. You cannot have a good economic system when your social arrangements are imperfect. If your religious ideas are low and grovelling, you cannot succeed in social, economic or political spheres.³⁷

Thus, these people pleaded that there should be a parallel advance in social as well as political sphere. They pointed out that concentration on social reform would transform the political movement into a mass movement. Any political action taken by this mass movement was bound to yield results. The upper class educated people alone, however advanced socially and politically they might be, would not be able to influence the decisions of the alien regime unless they had the full sup-

37. C.Y. Chintamani, ed. by, n. 4, p. 127.

port of the masses. Their representatives were more often not taken seriously and their protests went unheeded. The close relationship between political agitation and national solidarity could not be ignored. The influence of people's demand was to be measured not purely by its irrefutable logic but by its irresistible volume. To gain mass support for political demands the introduction of a social amelioration programme was the first condition. By experience the progressive intelligentsia had come to this tangible conclusion. A.C. Mazumdar pointed out:

In England, the Lords and the Commons appeal to the country at a time of crisis and the country voices forth the mandate of the nation. But have we got a country to appeal to and is the voice of the nation heard in the din of our political struggle? The nation do not live in the parks and squares of our great cities; but they are to be sought for in the remote villages and largely among the vast submerged population. How long, oh how long are we to drift! Drifting and drifting we have nearly stranded the barque of our society and the fate of the nation is trembling in the balance.³⁸

The social reformers also complained that those national leaders who were devoting a great proportion of their time and energy to political reform had come to believe erroneously in the infallibility of the social structure. In their view it had attained completeness even before they were born. They were not conscious of the fact that social slavery within the domestic jurisdiction was incompatible with the demand of political liberty; that prevailing social conditions, characterized by the outmoded customs, were undermining the very vitality and dynamism of the people and debasing their ideals. They were not ready to blame one social inadequacy for their prevailing helplessness. Thus the basis of their nationalism was wanting. Rabindra Nath Tagore complained:

We have accepted as the creed of our nationalism that this social system has been perfected for all times to

38. A.C. Mazumdar, "The Depressed Classes", *Indian Review* (Madras, 1910), Vol. XI, P. 7.

come by our ancestors, who had the super human vision of all eternity and supernatural power for making infinite provision for future ages. Therefore, for all our miseries and shortcomings, we hold responsible the historical surprises that burst upon us from outside. This is the reason why we think that our one work is to build a political miracle of freedom upon the quick sand of social slavery. In fact we want to dam up the true course of our own historical stream, and only borrow power from the sources of other people's history.³⁹

During the period under study much of the nationalist element with a radical approach to social reform tended to be conservative, if not reactionary, in matters of political freedom, whereas some of the nationalists who adhered to radicalism and militancy in the matter of political freedom were conservative if not reactionary, in the social matters. The conflicting approach not only tended to affect the growth of the social reform movement but also impeded the progress of nationalism.

The Arya Samaj

No less significant was the role of the Arya Samaj in enhancing the cause of nationalism. It was both a social and national movement. It sought to bring new life to India and to the Hindu race by its activities. It was the tendency of the Brahmo Samaj towards Christianity and its general westernizing influence which made the growth of the Arya Samaj an essential for Indian ideals. The country was in danger of their being completely supplanted by European ideals because the Anglicising process appeared to have gone far. It was the proper time that a distinctively Indian note should be introduced and that an aggressive movement should develop to eradicate indigenous superstition and work also for good Hindu ideals.

The Arya Samaj made a considerable contribution in the sphere of patriotism. In order to exhort the people to struggle for the sake of the nation its leaders quoted the patriotic sen-

39. Rabindra Nath Tagore, n. 8, pp. 122-23.

timents of Swami Dayananda from *Sattyarath Prakash* in their educating pamphlets:

Foreign Government perfectly free from religious prejudice, towards all the natives and the foreigners—kind, beneficent and just though it may be—can never render the people perfectly happy....(Foreign rule) is due to mutual feud, differences in religion, *want of purity in life, lack of education.*

Its leaders also fostered the spirit of militant nationalism quoting from the Vedas as thus:

As heaven and earth are not afraid,
And never suffer loss or harm,
Even so my spirit fear not thou,
As day and night are not afraid...
As what hath been and
What shall be, fear not.⁴⁰

But more emphatic and more open was the declaration made by Swami Shraddhanand, an ardent follower of the Samaj, when he stated in one of his articles that the "Aryas" could not but recognize that they had their duty to develop and bring about in them all those traits of character which led to manliness, a sense of justice and fair play, in short to do everything which would contribute to their social efficiency and make them "worthy descendants of worthy forebearers (however remote)." It was their mission to "unfasten the chains of intellectual and social bondage." The Arya Samaj was for everything good in human nature, and if loving one's country and one's people was good, the Samaj stood for it and was not ashamed of it. It believed in the ever true principles of association, co-operation and organisation. Whatever the Samaj did, it did openly. It discouraged sycophancy and double dealing of all nature. "Well, if all this", continued the author, "leads to a desire for political freedom, it has no reason to say 'No' (to it).... If ever the time comes when the Arya Samaj, out of fear, or out of diplomacy, or out of expediency, or for the sake of pleasing any human being or beings, says otherwise and changes its principles and its procedure,

40. *Atharveda*, Part II, p. 15, lines 1-6.

it shall be false to its God, and His scriptures, it shall be false to its founder and his mission and it shall deserve to die the death of a worm."⁴¹ This nature of the Arya Samaj led Mrs. Annie Besant to designate it a "hardhitting foe, meeting violence with violence, western in its vigorous fighting."⁴²

The writings quoted above played a very prominent role in rousing the Indian people into active resistance to alien influences which in the view of the Arya Samajists threatened to denationalize the social organization.

- Patriotism and politics are not synonymous, but the arousing of an interest in national matters is a natural consequence of arousing national pride. Moreover, the type of man to whom the Arya Samaj doctrine appealed was also the type of man to whom politics appealed viz; the intelligentsia who desired their country's advancement.

Equally worth mentioning is the revivalist activities of the Samaj. It appealed for the study of ancient Vedic culture and civilization. In the following extract from the *Arya Samaj and its Detractors*, this sentiment is very well visible:

When the Arya Samaj sings the glory of ancient India—the land of expositors of revealed learning, the sacred soil where Vedic institutions flourished ... the holy country where Vedic philosophy and Vedic Metaphysics attained their highest development, the sanctified clime where lived exemplars who embodied in their conduct the loftiest conceptions of Vedic ethical teachings—the health-forces of nationalism receive an impetus, and the aspirations of the young nationalist who had persistently dinned into his ear the mournful formula that Indian History recorded the lamentable tale of continuous and uninterrupted humiliation, degradation, foreign subjection, external exploitation, etc; feels that his dormant national pride is aroused and his aspirations stimulated. It is also true that the nationalism which seeks the shelter of Vedic

41. Swami Shraddhanand, "Sri Ram, Revolutionist", *Vedic Magazine Gurukula Samachar* (Gurukula Kangri, 1912), p. 25.

42. Annie Besant, n. 3, p. 193.

Church is a great agent of unification of Indian races, and is least productive of social animosity or sectarian bigotry. The Arya Samaj takes us back to a period of Indian History long anterior to the birth of Zoroastrianism, Buddhism, Christianity, and Mahomedanism Rama and Sita, Krishna and Arjuna, are national heroes and heroins of whose magnificent deeds and righteous activities all Indians, without distinction of caste, creed or race, might well feel proud. The *Upanishads* and the *Darshanas* are in a peculiar manner the common heritage of all Indians in whose veins flows the blood of *Kapila*, *Jaimini*, *Vyasa* and *Patanjali* no matter to what religion they belong now.... So patriotism, which is the handmaiden of Vedicism, is lofty, inspiring, vitalizing, unifying, tranquilizing, soothing, bracing and exhilarating. Instead of fermenting discord it promotes love and fosters harmony.

Further the authors wrote that the Vedic Church supported Indian Nationalism, not only by inspiring nationalists with pride in the past and hope in the future, but also by creating reverence in minds of non-Indian Aryans for India—the “birth place nursery” and seat of development of system of thought which alone had given them “solace” of mind.⁴³

These writings exercised a tremendous impact in fostering the spirit of nationalism and made the Hindu mind spellbound by the glories of ancient days. They inculcated patriotic pride in him. He began to dream of the day when independence would be achieved and his country would again be as great as it was in the past. The inculcation of this new spirit turned him into a supporter of freedom struggle. “We recognise the Arya Samaj and its patriotic vigour”, commented Mrs. Annie Besant, “as one of the strongest currents in the stream of Indian Nationality.”⁴⁴

But to the alien regime these writings and exhortations appeared to be no less than secretly hatched conspiracies against itself. Hence it came out with repression of the movement,

43, Munshi Ram and Ram Deva, *the Arya Samaj, and its Detractors* (Gurukula, Kangri, 1910), p. 14.

44. Annie Besant, n. 3, p. 94.

dismissal of its followers in government services due to their being considered as unreliable and undesirable, prohibition of meetings and processions, confiscation of its religious literature, pressure on the parents to remove their children from educational institutions organized by the Arya Samaj. But the repression failed. The more that repression was imposed the more the Arya Samajists turned into the ardent supporters of nationalism.

But the writings manifesting the spirit of revealism also had their reverse impact on the growth of nationalism in India. They could not provide solace to a mind of the Muslim intelligentsia who saw in Hindu revivalism a movement against his own community. He concluded that if ever India became independent it would be a Hindu-dominated India where the members of his community would have very little say in the day to-day dealings of country's affairs. It appeared to him too exclusive and too aggressive. And the leaders of the Arya Samaj could not clear these doubts out of a Muslim mind. This kind of restricted and negative attitude to Islam led the Muslims to mobilize on a corresponding communal level. Thus the activities of the Arya Samaj were partly an asset and partly a liability to the growth of nationalism. A.R. Desai summarizes this dualistic role as follows :

Its slogan 'Back to Vedas' was inspired with the urge to bring about national unity and to kindle national pride and consciousness. However, since it retained its narrow Hindu basis, the national unity it proclaimed could not gather into its fold the non-Hindu communities such as the Mahomedans and the Christians. It became a semi-rationalized form of HinduismWhen the national movement reached greater and greater secular heights, it became a hindrance to the growth of Indian nationalism by contributing, though unconsciously, to the creation of a belligerent religio-communal atmosphere.⁴⁵

Another vice that penetrated the organisation and which ultimately marred its nationalistic role was the proclamation

45. A.R. Desai, *Social Background of Indian Nationalism* (Bombay, Popular Book Depot, 1954, Second ed.), pp. 256-58.

by its founder as well as the followers that the Vedas were infallible and an inexhaustible source of all knowledge. This postulation of infallibility introduced an element of irrationality—the very anti-thesis of the main outlook of the newly growing nationalism. It put a ban on the individual's judgment to step over the divine text. It tried to override the indisputable fact that no knowledge would ever be complete in the ever-changing and often-fluctuating world. It also tried to ignore the fact that all knowledge is conditioned by historical movements and is governed and moulded or amended by the movement of social and economic forces that appear in the world from time to time. No progress could be conceived unless the people could do away with the false belief that the truth in its absolute form was revealed to humanity in the beginning of the world and it was fully known to the ancestors and that they had stated the last word on all problems of religion, sociology, politics, economics or art or even science. No body could ignore the fact that he was living in a new world which was very much different from the one in which his ancestors lived. Progress could only be possible on the capacity of the present day individual to choose rational means and a well-balanced attitude towards the past and the present with a strong determination to plan a future for humanity greater than the past.

The irrational eulogization of the immortality of the Vedas fostered the spirit of intellectual enslavement in its individual followers. It led to the drifting of its members from the rationalistic and liberalistic tendencies of nationalism. Lala Lajpat Rai pointed out :

If modern truths are to be tested by the sanctions of the ancient times, and to be promulgated only if they accord with the teachings of our *Rishis*, then woe to India. It is quite another thing to find evidence of the modern improvements in the ancient books and use the authority of the latter as an additional arrangement for their promulgation and acceptance. But to reject them because of their being opposed to, or inconsistent with, the dicta of the ancient *Rishis* is blocking the road to progress.⁴⁶

46. Lajpat Rai, *The Problem of National Education in India* (London, George Allen & Unwin, 1920), pp. 68-9.

Despite such drawbacks the Arya Samaj movement made a positive contribution to the growth of nationalism by putting a programme of social reform before the country. It made an all-round attack on the vices of Hindu social organism. To begin with, it repudiated the authority of priesthood, unequivocally denounced the meaningless rites, rituals, ceremonials and worshipping of various Gods and Goddesses responsible for the splitting of the people into innumerable mutually belligerent sects or classes. It opposed vehemently superstitions. It opposed the rigid sub-caste differences based on birth. In its novel interpretation, it laid down that the caste system had been a device of the privileged in order to protect their exalted position. With the introduction of the new economic system this obsolete and complicated system of caste rigidities should disappear, pleaded the followers of the movement. There was also no longer any need for maintaining birth as the basis of social position. They advocated in favour of inter-caste mobility based on character, action and nature. They considered the maintenance of the Depressed Classes as a separate caste as retrogressive. In their view a Sudra had every right to join the Brahmins if he had acquired the capacities of a Brahmin and acted in his day to day behaviour accordingly. They also denounced untouchability as inhuman. They opened educational institutions where the boys and girls of the Depressed Classes studied the Vedas in Sanskrit which orthodox Hindus had forbidden to any but the 'twice born'. Thus by attacking the dictatorship of the priestly class, by denouncing polytheism, by adopting the programme of mass education the Arya Samaj became a progressive phenomenon and inspired the spirit of democracy in the low caste people.

The Theosophical Society

No less significant than the Arya Samaj movement was the contribution of the Theosophical Society, led by foreigners like Mme. Blavatsky, Col. Olcott and Mrs. Annie Besant, in generating nationalism in India. All these personalities played a good part in the socio-political affairs of India to provide a great impetus to the newly emerging nationalism. Their great love and sympathy for India immensely assisted in creating a new fervour in the country. Valentine Chirol observed :

The advent of the theosophists...gave a fresh impetus to the revival, and certainly no Hindu has been so

much to organise and consolidate the movement as Mrs. Annie Besant, who...has openly proclaimed her faith in the superiority of the whole Hindu system to the vaunted civilization of the West. Is it surprising that Hindus should turn their backs upon our civilization when a European with highly trained intellectual power and with extraordinary gift of eloquence comes and tells them that it is they who possess and have for all time possessed the key to supreme wisdom, that their gods, their philosophy, their morality are on a higher plane of thought than the West has ever reached.⁴⁷

This writing is a testimony to the fact that like the other revivalist movements, theosophy did a lot in transforming the intellectual attitude of the English educated youths from hatred, scepticism and abhorrence of Hinduism to reverence and faith in it. Secondly, by reviving Hindu faith it inspired self-respect in Indians, pride in their past and hope in their future. Advocating the growth of Indian nationalism Mrs. Annie Besant herself suggested :

The West must come as a helper, not as a master, must recognise the greatness of the East, must show respect and not arrogance, and thus prepare the way for India's high place in the world—not only in the East—in the future; must enter into her life, place their western powers of organisation at her service in her struggle for liberty, and catch on their willing shoulders some of the blows aimed at her in the fight.⁴⁸

Besides, the Theosophical Society also brought people of different religions like Buddhism and Islam, into the national movement and tried to liberalise their uncompromising attitudes. It also pleaded for the eradication of racial distinctions.

Equally important was the contribution of the Theosophical Society in eradicating the vices of the caste system. The

47. Valentine Chirol, *Indian Unrest* (London, Macmillan & Co., 1910), pp. 28-9.

48. Annie Besant, n. 3, p. 94.

Theosophists also preached and worked for improving the dismal conditions of the Scheduled Classes. It was pointed out by them that there was no religious or social sanction for the treatment extended to such people. In order to raise them from their semi-slave status to make them full-fledged citizens the theosophists worked hard. During the course of a public address delivered at Madras on 24 October 1912, Mrs Besant called upon the Indian people to become conscious of their duty to these classes in order to get rid of the "national karma of the degradation into which these people have been plunged."⁴⁹ Indians should redeem them from the sin of their forefathers who conquered them and reduced them to slavery. They could not separate themselves from the past of their people, either in glory or in shame. Therefore, they should be fit to be touched, to be associated with and to be welcomed within the home. She further stated :

Translate Pariah's feelings into your own...
Realise that every nation has one life;
that neglect of one part injures all.⁵⁰

Sister Nivedita

By the untimely death of Swami Vivekananda in 1902 the Ramakrishna Mission suffered a great setback. However, the responsibility of its work was taken over by Margaret Noble, an Irish woman who came to be known popularly as Sister Nivedita. Her great service to India, which she adopted as her "second motherland", and her love for her, are worth recording. She consciously served the needs of silent and the voiceless millions and she gave them the message which formulated as national consciousness.

Influenced by the ideal of national independence she played a very significant part in encouraging revolutionary activities. Her name is closely associated with the militant activities of Aurobindo and Tilak, and Upadhyaya. Inspired by her own country's national war of independence she displayed great contempt for the alien rule in India. Exhorting Indi-

49. Annie Besant, *Wake up India* (Madras, Theosophical Publishing House, 1913), pp. 85-7.

50. *Ibid.*, pp. 89 & 94 and also see p. 106.

ans to continue ~~their~~ struggle against British rule she once stated, "Never lower your flag to the foreigner....India must be recognised as the ~~first~~ here."⁵¹

Among her writings the most prominent work is *Footfalls of Indian History* devoted to the study of Indian history at its various stages. With the passion of the research scholar she delved into the ancient history of India. During her stay in India she became intimately familiar with the people and their achievements since ancient times. Her study of our civilization and culture convinced her of the creative ideals regulating Indian social norms. Through her influential creations she inculcated a spirit of participation in the people. Her thought had concerned itself with every form of national consciousness. She stated :

Let her (India) but once more feel the great pulse through all the veins and no power on earth would stand before her newly awakened energy....He who thinks himself weak is weak; he who believes that he is strong is already invincible. And so for his nation ..Vivekananda had but one constantly reiterated message:

Awake ! Arise ! Struggle on.
And stop not till the
Goal is reached !⁵²

Muslim Renaissance

As a result of the spread of modern education through the endeavours of the Aligarh Movement under the leadership of Sir Syed Ahmad Khan and the general awakening in India there grew up an educated class of Indian Muslims. These people closely watched the functioning of their social organism and became aware of its virtues and vices. In their writings and speeches they tried to limelight the drawbacks of Muslim society and remind it to be conscious of the moving spirit of the time. They appealed to the unchanging and

51. Moni Bagchee, *Sister Nivedita*, a collection of her writings and the tributes paid by others with a short biographical sketch (Calcutta, 1956), p. 168.

52. Ibid, p. 281.

orthodox Mussalman to arouse and imbibe the dynamic qualities of change. These social thinkers of Islam focussed on the necessity of preserving a uniform social system for their people and to counteract the forces of decay. They disclosed new dimensions and standards of human conduct. They explained that their social environment had become static and required revision in the light of new ideas and thoughts. They exhorted them to counteract the egocentrism rampant in Muslims. They castigated as sinful the static and passivist ethics manifesting itself in the prevailing caste system among the Muslims, which had misled and bifurcated their entire social organism into countless classes and sects. Muhammed Iqbal lamented :

You are known as Syed, and Mughal,
 You call yourselves Pathan;
 But can you truly claim as well,
 The name of Mussalman?⁵³

In the category of those who from the inception of reformist tendencies worked for introducing modern practices in the social structures of Indian Islam, the most eminent and distinctive figure was Altaf Hussain, popularly known as Hali. He lent his weight of social thinking to the newly struggling movement for change. By producing his epic *Musaddas* he strengthened the forces of modernization. In this famous work the author appealed to the whole Indian Muslim community to accept the importance of the necessity of social change and to lend their support to the growth of this new sentimental phenomenon.

However, it should be admitted that most of these Muslim reformers were trying to consolidate the Muslim community not in order to merge its identification in the larger movement of nationalism. Their reformatory intentions were primarily motivated with the object of carving out a separate state of Islamic nationalism. After his return from Europe Iqbal had ceased to speak for a consolidated nationalism of all Indian people. He was gradually evolving the doctrine of Pan-Islamism. The views of others were also likewise.

53. *The Complaint and the Answer*, Shikwah and Jawba-i-Shikwah (Lahore, 1943), p. XVII, Para III.

But this does not mean that there was a complete dearth of the nationalist-minded Muslims. Most prominent among them were Mazhar-ul-Haque, Nawab Syed Mohammad, Dr. Ansari, Hakim Ajmal Khan, Maulana Abul Kalam Azad and even Mohamed Ali Jinnah before Gandhi's active entry into Indian politics. Inspired by modern ideas they tried to bring as many Muslims as possible into the nationalist movement. In an address delivered at the All India Shia Conference in 1913 Nawab Syed Mohammed stated :

It is absolutely incumbent on us, the Indian Mussalmans, that we should regard and treat as brothers all other Indians and work together....Hindus and Mohammedans have lived side by side now for centuries and it is not in the nature of things that one may be able to rise at the expense of the other. Both these great communities have to live together and work out their destiny jointly. Their lot is cast in this country.⁵⁴

54. The text of the address published in the *Indian Review* (Madras, Natesan & Co., 1913), vol. XIV, p. 823.

CHAPTER VII

SECULARISM VS COMMUNALISM

I am using the word "nationalist" in a secular, not in a religious sense,—the one who says: "It is religion which is everywhere standing in the way of a United Nation. It is Religion which divides us, and gives the foreigner the upper hand over us. It is religion also which, in matters internal and social, is blocking everywhere the pathway of reform. It binds us to customs which choke national expansion; it is the root-cause of all our hopeless conservatism; it hinders at every turn the speed of enlightened national views; it is the fruitful source of degrading practices and demoralizing superstitions." Away with it! Let it have nothing to do with politics; and therefore, nothing to do with Nationalism. Politics and Nationalism are public matters on which men can unite, even though they differ in the private concern of religion.

[C F. Andrews, "Nationalism and Religion", *Indian Review* (Madras, 1910), Vol. XI, January 1910, pp. 9-11.]

Phase of Co-ordination and Friendship

Before the establishment of the British rule in India during many centuries of living side-by-side the two major communities of India—Hindus and Muslims—had evolved a socio-political system of co-operation despite the appearance of the occasional feelings of discord between them. To say that for a thousand years Hindus and Muslims co-existed, not peacefully, but like Plato's team of horses one of which flies to the sun while the other moves towards the earth, is not only unhistorical but absurd, because that is not the method in which people live together or live creatively.

Since the stabilization of the Moghul rule in India there prevailed communal tranquillity and cordial amity in Hindus and Muslims except during the reign of Aurangzeb when he hopelessly embarked on religious prosecution. It would be out of context to detail the entire history of this co-ordiality here. Suffice it is to say that the latest manifestation of this feeling in the pre-stabilization period of the British rule in India took place during the national upsurge of 1857.

The 1857 uprising was characterized by one single fact— a remarkable sense of unity displayed both by Hindus and Muslims of India against their common adversary. Only rarely we come across some instances where there appeared to emerge a conflict on communal lines. All the major communities—whether Muslim or Hindu or Parsi—interpreted the things from the same point of view and judged events by the same standards. Most of the Hindus and Muslims had developed friendly relations as a result of the common heritage of centuries. The events of 1857 proved beyond any shadow of doubt that the attempts of the colonialists to divide and rule could not achieve the desired results. In the struggle Hindus and Muslims made a common endeavor to liberate themselves from the British rule. That is why, the struggle took a national and racial but not a communal shape. A manifesto was issued by the revolutionaries at Delhi, under the signature of Bahadur Shah in May 1857, urging both the major communities to unite in the struggle to defend their common heritage. The proclamation stated:

To all Hindus and Mussalmans, citizens and servants of Hindustan the officers of the army now at Delhi and at Meerut send greetings.... We, solely on account of our religion, have combined with the people and have not spared one infidel. It is therefore requisite, that whoever of the soldiers and the people dislike turning into Christians will unite cordially with the army, take courage and not leave the seed of these devils in any place.... It is, therefore, necessary that all Hindus and Mohammedans should be of one mind in this struggle, and make arrangements for their preservation with the advice of some creditable persons. Whenever the arrangements shall be good, and with

whomsoever the subjects shall be pleased, those individuals shall be placed in high offices in those places.¹

All the insurgents emphasized communal unity for the success of the struggle. The Moghul emperor, the insurgent soldiers, and the great Ulemas and Shastris issued proclamations and announced *fatwas* laying emphasis on the communal unity as the need of the time and duty of all the inhabitants. The Proclamation issued by Bahadur Shah on 25 August 1857 stated:

It is well known to all, that in this age the people of Hindustan, both Hindus and Mohammedans, are being ruled under the tyranny and oppression of the infidel and treacherous English. It is the imperative duty of all to take it into their careful consideration and abide by it. Parties anxious to participate in the common cause shall receive their daily subsistence from me: and be it known to all, that the ancient works, both of the Hindus and the Mohammedans, the writings of the miracle workers, and the calculations of the astrologers, pundits and *rammals* all agree in asserting that the English will no longer have any footing in India or elsewhere. Therefore, it is incumbent on all to give up the hope of the continuation of the British sway. Side with me and deserve the consideration of the Badshahi or Imperial Government by their individual exertion in promoting the common good and thus attain their respective ends.²

In all the areas liberated from colonial domination the first thing the participants did was to issue *farmans* for banning cow-slaughter and enforcing it. In the topmost political and military organs both Hindus and Muslims got an equal representation. During those hectic days Bahadur Shah invited the Hindu princes of Rajputana to join the great struggle. He also promised to resign willingly the Imperial power into their

1. Quoted by R.C. Majumdar, *The Sepoy Mutiny and Revolt of 1857* (Calcutta, 1958), p. 229.
2. S.A. Rizvi & M.L. Bhargava, ed., *Freedom Struggle in Uttar Pradesh: Source-Material* containing 21 plates of original documents (Lucknow, Publications Bureau, Information Department, Uttar Pradesh, 15, August 1957), Vol. I, p. 348.

hands. The most notable fact was the revolutionary upsurge beginning with the Hindu soldiers, actually ended in putting on the throne a Muslim Emperor as a symbol of the national sovereignty.

Sir Syed Ahmad Khan

No less significant was the contribution of Sir Syed Ahmad Khan in endeavouring to evolve nationhood in India. In his prominent social position he represented not only a reformed Islam but also a united nationhood. For sometime he perhaps exemplified all that was the best in Indian nationalism. His devoted life for the public cause in those days perhaps set an incomparable illustration of his being an apostle of nationalism and self-sacrifice. He remained at the helm of not only Muslim but also Indian affairs for more than five decades utilizing his intellectual powers for the benefit of his countrymen. His assimilation of Western knowledge assisted his thinking process to exhort the people to be receptive of the new ideas and philosophies of the West and to act in sincerity for building up of the Indian nation on the scientific and rational lines drawing their sustenance from the Western liberalism of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. Notwithstanding his major time devoted in reforming the Muslim social organism and its education, the problem of generating the feelings of unity among the major communities of India also engrossed his attention.

In the beginning of 1884 he toured the Punjab to collect funds for the Aligarh College. During his trip innumerable addresses eulogizing his services to the nation were presented to him. Hindus joined Mohammedans in honouring this leader of the nation. On his part he perhaps left no stone unturned in exhorting and appealing to the people of both the communities to act for evolving and advancing a composite nationhood representing the sentiments of every community in India. He held that Hindus and Muslims constituted one nation. Defining the word nation (qaum) he said that it applied to the people who inhabited a country. "Remember that Hindu and Musalman", he clarified. "are religious words; otherwise, Hindus, Musalmans and even Christians who inhabit this country—all constitute, on this account, one nation." When all these groups were, he held, one nation, then

whatever benefited the country, which was the country of all of them, should benefit all. He remarked quite categorically that the days were gone when only on account of variation in religion the inhabitants of a country should have been regarded as belonging to two distinct nations.³

Speaking in another gathering of Hindus in Punjab he said:

The word Hindu that you have used for yourselves, is in my opinion not correct, because that is not in my view the name of a religion. Rather every inhabitant of Hindustan can call himself a Hindu. I am, therefore, sorry that you do not regard me as a Hindu although I too am an inhabitant of Hindustan.⁴

At another time he again emphasized:

Just as the Aryan people are called Hindus, even so are also Musalmans Hindus, that is to say, inhabitants of Hindustan.⁵

It was but inevitable that such utterances by him had brought him the fame of an undisputed leader of both Hindus and Muslims. It should also be remembered that in 1884 he organized a public meeting for Babu Surendra Nath Banerjea to speak about simultaneous competitive examinations for the Indian Civil Service and himself presided over it. It is also true that he greatly admired the Bengali intellectuals who were the vanguard of the national liberation movement.

Efforts of Hindu Liberals

Likewise, there were Hindu liberals who sincerely took pains to accelerate the process of making India a homogenous nation manifesting the aspirations of every religious commu-

3. Cited by Razzaqi, *Sir Syed Awr Islah-i-Mucashara* (Lahore, Institute of Islamic Culture, 1963), p. 205. Cited by Maulvi Tufail Ahmad, *Musalmanon Ka Roshan Mustaqbil* (Delhi, 1945), p. 284. Munshi Sirajuddin, ed., *Majmua-i-Lectures Sir Syed Ahmad* (Lahore, 1890), p. 167. For further study see Syed Rais Ahmad Jafri, ed., *Rare Documents* (Lahore, Muhammad Ali Academy, 1967), p. 85.

4. Sir Syed Ahmed Khan, *Safarnama Punjab* (Lahore, 1890), p. 139.

5. *Sir Syed Ke Akhri Mozamin* (Delhi, 1893), p. 55.

nity. In his famous eloquent literary style Babu Surendra Nath Banerjea addressed a meeting of the Students Association in Calcutta on 16 March 1878 on the subject of Indian unity. Invoking the genius of history he referred to the dissensions, jealousies and animosities that had brought about the downfall of Indians and had perpetuated their degradation. He called upon the gathering to "learn to respect the holy principles of union, learn to love one another as brothers and learn to make common cause for the redress of common grievances."⁶

Contribution of the Alien Regime in the evolution of communal politics

By their long experience the British colonialists were very well aware that in a pre-capitalist society religious antagonisms plays a significant role, because the prevailing forms of social organism are largely expressed through the religious and racial forms. Religious wars and racial feuds are commonly direct manifestations of struggles for existence of all communities. And religious conflicts are generally frequent in a society which is socially backward. They represent in part, a reflection of old antagonisms, whose real basis has already vanished, but whose ideology has not been replaced owing to the deterioration of social and ideological growth.

Like all other imperialists and conquerors in all foreign lands and in all ages the British ruling authorities lost no time in adopting the maxim of *Divide et Impera* in order to create communal animosities between the two major religious communities of India and to maintain their ascendancy of control and economic exploitation. At the same time they were interested in weakening the nationalist forces manifesting the emergence of a popular will of a united secular India moving slowly towards an alternative of power that would ultimately replace the prevailing political evolution of an alien power. They appeared to have followed the advice rendered by Mountstuart Elphinstone: "*Divide et Impera* was the old German motto and it should be ours". Thus the growth of irreconcilable differences between Hindus and Muslims during the remaining period of their regime in India, were in no small

6. *Speeches and Writings of Surendra Nath Banerjea* (Madras, G. A. Natesan & Co., first ed.), pp. 215-16.

measure the consequence of a deliberate application of this dictum. In its first stage their attitude was adopted in the early days of the establishment of the rule of the East India Company. Despite many successes under the aegis of the maxim the British regime appeared to have been horrified to see the emergence of remarkably amicable unity between the Hindus and Muslims during the great national upsurge of 1857, in which both Hindus and Musalmans enthusiastically rallied round the Emperor of Delhi. But no less they were perturbed to see that the English education which had spread among Hindus, had brought with it the ideas of freedom and democracy. They realized that to counteract the newly growing national consciousness manifesting the fusion of the two communities the time had arrived to side with the Muslims who had so far been looked upon with disfavour and met with repressive measure due to their active participation in the upsurge of 1857. Thus the alien rulers decided to put themselves between the major communities and create a communal triangle in which they would act as central pivot.

One principle figure in implementing this policy was Mr Beck⁷, the Principal of Aligarh College, who tried to wean Sir Syed away from nationalism and transfer his political attachment from the British liberals to the conservatives and to evoke in him encouragement for a rapprochement between the Muslims and the government. He was singularly successful in his mission. Sir Syed's "trusting nature was cynically exploited to array him against Indian nationalism. He was misled into believing that while an Anglo-Muslim alliance would ameliorate the conditions of the Muslim community, the nationalist alignment would lead the latter once again to sweat, toil and tears".⁸

But Mr. Beck was not an isolated phenomenon acting in vacuum. He was working in close collaboration with the British Civil Service which itself was actively engaged in winning over the educated and politically conscious Muslim classes all

7. For detailed activities of Mr. Beck see Asoka Mehta and Achyut Pattawardhan, *Communal Triangle* (Allahabad, Kitabistan, 1942), pp. 59-65.

8. Ibid, pp. 53-4.

over India. For a time the Muslim minority was the hope of the British government in India. As far back as 1888, Lord Dufferin and Sir Auckland Colvin (Lieutenant Governor of U.P.) had successfully appealed to the fears, and won them over by promises of preferential treatment. The policy had been consistently followed since then. The bulk of the educated Muslims had opposed the Congress, in order to please the colonialists and win their gratitude.

But no less significant was the contribution of the short-sightedness perhaps displayed by the leaders of the Indian National Congress in transforming Sir Syed and his politically conscious followers and associates from nationalists into communalists. They remained singularly absent-minded of the underground manouverings of the alien rulers. They became conscious only when the tie had already been cast in favour of the British bureaucracy. Moreover, with his traditional nationalist background and in reward to his worthy services devoted in championing the cause of Hindu-Muslim unity perhaps more powerfully than any other single nationalist among Hindus at that time, Sir Syed perhaps was singularly hopeful of being honoured as, if not the first or the second, at least the third President of the Indian National Congress. But the founders of the Congress perhaps displayed an unbelievable short-sightedness in not reading the mental contours of Sir Syed. There is nothing on record to show that the Congress leaders ever attempted to reconcile with him or approached him to join the Congress. And that was highly essential to beat the British manouvers. The Congress leaders elected even for the third session Baddruddin Tyabji as the President. Despite his own social status in the national life as well as his own Muslim community for being a pioneer of secular nationalism he* was no match to Sir Syed Ahmad Khan. Perhaps disillusioned by this scene the latter lost no time in further moving away from the movement attempting national integration, and thus affirming his loyalty to the colonialists.

Shortly afterwards Tyabji had been appointed a Judge of the High Court and continued to hold that office till his demise in 1906. It is obvious that under such circumstances it was no longer feasible for him to participate in political life. His departure from the political arena had a very adverse effect on Muslim nationalism. Muslims were deprived of his guidance at a critical juncture, when it particularly needed it to integrate itself with secular nationalism.

At the session of the All-India Muslim Educational Conference held at Lucknow on 28 December 1887 he made a historical speech in which he analysed the dangerous implications of the Congress demands and strongly advised the Muslims to keep aloof from the Congress. He also added, "when our Hindu brethren or Bengali friends wish to make a move which involves a loss to us and humiliation to our community we cannot remain friendly, and undoubtedly it is our duty to protect our community from those attacks of the Hindus and Bengalis, which, we are sure, are going to harm our community."⁹

After the Madras session of the Congress Baduruddin Taiyabji made a statement that he had got a rule adopted by the Congress to the effect that any question which was objected to by the Muslim delegates or a big majority of them would not be discussed in the Congress. And on this plea Taiyabji emphasized the desirability of Muslims participating in the Congress. Joining issue with Taiyabji and ridiculing the election system of delegates to the Congress session Sir Syed asserted that in the foremost he objected to the word "delegate". He believed that the Muslims who went from his United Provinces to attend the Congress at Madras did not deserve the appellation "delegate". He charged that the Muslims who went there were not elected even by ten Muslims. Holding the Congress to be a partisan body he stipulated that the unanimous passing of any resolution in the Congress did not make it a national Congress. In his view a Congress became national only when all the aims and objects of the nation whom that Congress represented, were common without exception. He continued, "My honourable friend admits that some aims and objects of the Muslims and the Hindus are different and contradictory. Should we Muslims found a separate Congress to realise our different aims? Should the two Congresses compete and even fight with each other in view of their conflicting and antagonistic aims?" He also added that the so-called Muslim Congress should themselves decide in all fairness whether such communities whose aims and objects were opposed to one

9. Cited by Jamil-ud-Din Ahmad, "Muslim Freedom Movement", *The Pakistan Times* (Lahore), 9 July 1967, mag. section, p. 1; G. Allana, *Pakistan Movement: Historic Documents* (Karachi, Paradise Subscription Agency, 1967), p. 2.

another, though some minor points might be common, could be a national Congress? Leaving it to Taiyebji to decide whether such an approach might be appropriate or not he concluded: "but no Muslim, be he a cobbler or a nobleman, would ever agree to the Muslims being relegated to a status where they become slaves of another community which is their neighbour even though time has reduced them to a very low position and will reduce them still further."¹⁰

In reply to the Hindu leaders' objections to his pronouncements Syed Ahmad Khan issued a hysterical statement in February 1888 in the course of which he said: "If our Bengali friends want to trample underfoot this fallen nation (Muslims) they should not expect that we will submit. The Congress, in fact, represents a civil war without arms. The civil war decides who will wield authority. The object of the Congress is to have the British Government only in the name of India, but the internal Government of the country should pass into their hands.... We too like civil war but not one without arms. If Government is willing to transfer the internal Government we should request it first to pass a law of competition, and the internal Government should be placed in the hands of community which comes out successful in this competitive examination. But the Government should allow the use of a different kind of pen, the pen which our forefathers wielded and which is indeed the pen needed for carrying on the Government of the country. Thus, whoever succeeds should govern the country."¹¹

Sir Syed continued his vituperous campaign against the Congress unabated. In a public statement delivered in 1893 he charged that the aims and objects of the Indian National Congresses were based upon ignorance of history and contemporary realities; they did not take into consideration that India was inhabited by different nationalities; they presupposed that the Muslims like the Marhattas, the Brahmins, the Kshatriyas, the Banias, the Sudras, the Sikhs, the Bengalis, the Madrasis, and the Peshawaris could all be treated alike, and all

10. G. Allana, n.9, pp.2-3. For the views of nationalist Muslims attending the Congress session of that year please see S. Abid Husain, *The Destiny of Indian Muslims* (New Delhi, 1965), pp. 46-8.

11. Jamil-ud-Din Ahmad, n. 9, p. 1.

of them belonged to the same nation. He pooh-poohed the Congress thinking that they professed the same religion, and they spoke the same language, that their attitude to history was similar and was based upon the same historical traditions.¹²

In still another speech he alleged that the proposals of the Congress were exceedingly inexpedient for a country which was inhabited by two different communities. After stating this he added:

Now suppose that all the English were to leave India..., then who would be the rulers of India? Is it possible that under these circumstances two nations—the Mohammedan and the Hindu—could sit on the same throne and remain equal in power? Most certainly not. It is necessary that one of them should conquer the other and thrust it down. To hope that both remain equal is to desire the impossible and the inconceivable.¹³

It may be recalled that a considerable number of Muslims were opposed to Sir Syed's anti-Congressism. The *Oudh Punch*, a humorous weekly of Lucknow as well as most popular and influential Muslim journal ridiculed Sir Syed and his patriotic Association or "Anti-Congress" to which it had given the name of "Madam Anti".

On the other hand, shortly after the repudiation of his entire secular past Sir Syed was honoured by the imperialists with the K.C.S.I. in 1889. In order to win over the favour of the colonialists he stooped down to their abject flattery.

After this change Sir Syed left no stone unturned to prove the *bonafides* of Muslim loyalty to the British. He declared that a Muslim should never join Hindu agitation against the government "unless he has been thoroughly denationalised and takes pride in being a slave of the Hindus", because the numerical strength of the Muslims was only one-fourth of the

12. G. Allana, n. 9, p. 3.

13. Ibid.

Hindus and they had nothing to gain by joining the agitation.¹⁴

The emphasis which Sir Syed laid upon absolute loyalty to the British rule was calculated to appeal not only to the sentiment of his people whose faith is rooted in the doctrine of authority, but also to their self-interest. He saw a much better opportunity for the preservation of their religious and communal rights under British rule than under any revival of so-called Hindu rule or any form of so-called Hindu political ascendancy. As long as he was alive he worked consistently, and on the whole successfully, against any Muslim's participation in such political movements as the Indian National Congress.

It was through this changed attitude of Sir Syed that the foundations of the future state of Pakistan were laid down by the alien regime. Perhaps an insurmountable barrier had been installed in the way of the emergence of secular Bourgeois-democratic nationalism manifesting the will of all the upper class people belonging to various religious communities. Valentine Chirol wrote:

14. *The Chaudwin Sadi* (Rawalpindi), 8 February 1897; *Selections from Vernacular Press*, (Government of India, 1897,) pp. 128-30. In spite of his claim to be the harbinger of modernization to Muslims his thinking was basically coloured by medievalism when the writ of feudalism was rampant all over. Though influenced by Mill and others he strongly advocated the inclusion of Indians in the legislative councils and district boards, yet he despised the system of direct election on the basis of adult franchise. He failed to realize that the course of world history was being determined not on the basis of a particular sect or community but that of class structure prevailing in a particular society. In the course of a speech on Lord Ripon's Local Self-Government Bill in the Imperial Legislative Council in 1883 he observed:

The system of representation by election means the representation of the views and interests of the majority of the population and in countries where the population is composed of one race and one creed it is no doubt the best system that can be adopted. But, my lord, in a country like India, where caste distinctions still flourish, where there is no fusion of the various races, where religious distinctions are still violent, where education in its modern sense has not made an equal or proportionate progress among all the sections of the population, I am convinced that the introduction of the principle of election, pure and simple, for representation of various interests on Local Boards and District

In our day the British connexion has had no stouter and more convinced supporter than the late Sir Syed Ahmed, than whom no Mahomedan has deserved or enjoyed greater influence over his Indian co-religionists. Not only does his educational work,...live after him...but also his political faith which taught the vast majority of educated Mahomedans to regard their future as bound up with the preservation of British rule.¹⁵

The defection of Sir Syed Ahmad Khan from the movement of nationalism was received as a great shock by his admirers, especially those from among the Hindus. They expressed a sense of disillusionment and frustration. All their great hopes and expectations built up by the influencing public stature of Sir Syed were shattered to grounds. They saw in Sir Syed's departure not only a loss of a great personality from the community of the figures of all India importance but an irreparable loss to the cause of national intergration.

Among his close admirers was also Lala Lajpat Rai who had displayed a keen interest in Sir Syed's national activities and felt greatly inspired to dedicate his life for the same. On the occurrence of the radical repudiation of his past by Sir Syed, Lalaji felt greatly disappointed and addressed a series of open letters requesting his former political teacher to explain the reasons of the sudden *volte-face* in his political views. In his first letter he wrote:

Before I address you in my *matlabs* (views), I think it advisable to state for your information that I have been a constant reader and admirer of your writings.

Councils would be attended with evils of greater significance than purely economic considerations....The larger community would totally override the interests of the smaller community and the ignorant public would hold Government responsible for introducing measures which might make the differences of race and creed more violent than ever.

[Cited by Jamilud-Din Ahmad, n. 9, p.2. Also see K.P. Karunakaran, ed., *Modern Indian Political Tradition*, a collection of writings and speeches by prominent Indian leaders (New Delhi. Allied Publishers, 1962), pp. 216-18.]

15. Valentine Chirol, *Indian Unrest* (London, Macmillan & Co., 1910), p. 133.

From childhood, I was taught to respect the opinions and the teachings of the white-bearded Syed of Aligarh. Your *Social Reformer* was constantly read to me by my fond father, who looked upon you as no less than a prophet of the nineteenth century. Your writings in the *Aligarh Institute Gazette*, and your speeches in Council and other public meetings, were constantly studied by me and preserved as a sacred trust by my revered parents. It was thus that I came to know that you once approved of the contents of John Stuart Mill's book on "Liberty"...It is strange then that I have been astonished to read what you now speak and in my circumstances would shout out: Times, have changed and with them convictions. Flattery and official cajoleries have blinded the eyes of the most-seeing; cowardice has depressed the souls of the foremost of seekers after truth, and high sounding titles and the favours of worldly governors have extinguished the fire of truth burning in many a noble heart. Is it not a sad spectacle to see men whose days are numbered, whose feet are almost in the grave, trying to root out all the trees planted with their own hand!!!

Continuing further Lalaji wrote:

Under these circumstances, Syed Sahib, it is, surely, not strange if I ask what has been the cause of this lamentable change in you. Old age and exhaustion of faculties may, perhaps, have some share in causing you to forget what you once wrote and spoke. Has your memory lost its retentiveness, or is it the blindness of old age which has permitted you to stray into your present unhappy position?¹⁶

In his correspondence the author of the letters also cited quotations from Sir Syed's writing "Causes of the Indian Revolt" pleading for the introduction of representative form of institutions in India. He also reminded him his walkout from the Agra Durbar to disapprove the strong discriminatory

16. Lala Lajpat Rai; *The Man in his word*, a collection of his writings and speeches (Madras, Ganesh & Co., 1907), pp. 1-2.

policy of the alien regime. After detailing his similar great political achievements to him Lala Lajpat Rai wrote further:

Sir Syed, does it not sound strange the writer of the words above quoted should put himself forward as the leader of the anti-Congress movement? Is it not one more proof of India's misfortune that the writer of the above words should impute bad motives to the supporters of the National Congress, mainly because they advocate the introduction of some sort of representation in the Legislative Councils of India? Is not your charge of sedition against the promoters of the Congress, in the face of these, a mere mockery, a contradiction in terms? Thirty years ago, you advocated the institution of a Parliament and yet you chide us saying that we want an Indian Parliament....Why this change, why this inconsistency?... Sir, your fall seems to remind me of the fall of Adam just as Satan is said to be the cause of the fall of that progenitor of our race....To us, who are yet, we hope, to live long and to fight out the bloodless battle of liberty, it is destined to remain a permanent disgrace. The line of agreement against us would be that the races which produce such inconsistent philosophers are not fit to receive the boon of Local Self-Government....It is simply childish to persist in your claim to consistency in the face of above quotations. Better announce this change and explain why and how this took place?

Lamenting over the change Lalaji continued further :

Well may we say that it is.... "the worst of times"... *worst* as a particular section of the country unfortunately is headed or at least is said to be headed by a man who has been a frequent advocate of representative government in India....It is the "winter of despair" when we see her own sons deserting the cause of awakened India ..Would you, pray, tell me, Sir? Are we disloyal because we, according to your own teachings, have come forward to speak up for our country's good?...You taught us to do exactly what we have begun doing now. You not only taught but encouraged us by your own example. Why do you now deprecate

"this healthy sign of civilization" as you once called on us to consider it the part of India? Sir Syed, for God's sake, reconsider your position and do not disappoint us just when the morning of hope has begun to dawn over us and over motherland.¹⁷

For some days Lalaji waited for reply from Sir Syed for his first three letters. Not receiving it, he wrote the fourth and the last, but not the least important, letter in which he requested him not to fall in the trap of the British bureaucracy which like a fairy coquettish maiden appeared to promise much but in the end yielded very little. He ended this letter with the following interesting poem:

I know a maiden fair to see,
 Take care,
 She can both false and friendly be,
 Beware! Beware!
 She has two eyes so soft and brown,
 Take care,
 She gives a side-glance and looks down
 Beware! Beware!...
 And she has hair of a golden hue,
 Take care!
 And what she says *it is not true*,
 Beware! Beware!
 She has a bosom as white as snow,
 Take care!
 She knows how much it is best to show,
 Beware! Beware;
 Trust her not.
 She is fooling thee.¹⁸

Among those who felt perturbed over Sir Syed's change of political inclinations were not only the Hindu nationalists but there was a good number of prominent close Muslim associates of Sir Syed, who failed to reconcile to this sudden drift in his attitude and his past performance. The heart-searching criticism developing among his colleagues promised to tran-

17. *Ibid*, pp. 15-6, 25-7.

18. *Ibid*, pp. 37-8.

transcend the limits of their personal loyalty to Sir Syed for his invaluable services to the cause of nationalism. It can be traced in an abortive attempt to express their dissent in an article prepared for the release in press which could not be published owing to the demise of Sir Syed at the nick of time. The deep concern expressed by persons moving in Sir Syed's closet stands in sharp contrast to the explanation reported to have been tendered by Sir Syed for his defection from the main movements of nationalism which highly exaggerated the apprehensions howering the minds of the minorities—especially the Muslims. It is self-evident from the following extract prepared in 1907 by Nawab Vikar-ul-Mulk, the Secretary of the Aligarh college :

By the closing years of the last century several of the trustees of the Aligarh College had come to feel that Sir Syed's policy needed serious correction. It was then sense of gratitude to Sir Syed for his unique services to the community, which prevented them from opposing him openly.

But at last this patience was exhausted:

We felt that we must no longer allow our regard for and personal loyalty to Sir Syed to stand in the way of our declaring our views and speaking out our minds in the interest of the community. Accordingly I wrote an article for publication in a Lahore Journal *Paisa Akhbar*, sent it to Nawab Mohsin-ul-Mulk and Khawaja Altaf Husain Hali for their approval and endorsement as it was intended to come in our joint names. But in the meanwhile, we got the sad news of Sir Syed's death. In the face of the great blow the community had received in his death, the publication of the article was naturally abandoned.¹⁹

The anti-nationalist activities of Sir Syed gave impetus to the growth of a separatist movement among Indian Muslims who organized meetings in the coming years and passed resolutions against Muslims' participation in the Indian National Congress. Some Muslims also went to the extent of issuing a

19. Cited by Mohammad Amin Zuberi, *Vikar-i-Hayat* (1939), p. 420.

Fatwa against those Muslims who wanted to join the ranks of the Congress.²⁰

Muslims in Congress

It does not, however, mean that none of the Muslims joined the Congress. A considerable number of them were in it since its very inception and their number had begun to increase gradually. To counteract the impact of the communalist Muslims the nationalist-minded Muslims like Maulvi Abdul Qadir Ludhianvi issued *Fatwa* in which it was stated that in worldly affairs it was permissible for Muslims to co-operate with the Hindus in the work of Congress.

Besides, there were other prominent Muslim leaders in the national organization. Nawab Syed Mohammed had been a conspicuous figure on the Congress platform since 1894 and a staunch and consistent supporter of its cause. Twice in the annals of the Congress in the 19th century had there been a Muslim as President. Mr. Badruddin Tyabji distinguished himself as the President of the Third Congress at Madras in 1887 and Mr. R.M. Sayani was invited to preside at the Congress held in Calcutta in 1896. Both were advanced Mohammedans of great culture, eminent public spirit and independence and were gifted with some political insight of a high order. Broad-minded as they were and far from all narrow and racial prejudices, they were able in inculcating a spirit of tolerance among their own politically backward co-religionists and exhorting them to share in the deliberations of the Congress, fully convinced that the political welfare of the two great Indian communities could only be brought to a successful issue when they joined together for the common object. They were the advance guards among the educated Mohammedans of their respective days advancing the cause of the National Congress and propagating its object for the common good of the country. Muslims then were backward in their political progress; but these two had forecast the coming of that day when higher education would bring them in a line with their more advanced brethren of the Hindu community.

20. A detailed study of these anti-national activities of the sectarian Muslims has been made at some other place in this chapter.

Each in his own sphere was prudent in propagating those higher ideals which when persistently entertained and realised lead to the building up of a nation. Educated in the school of Dadabhoy Naoroji and closely associated in active public life with Mr. K.T. Talang and Sir Pherozeshah M. Mehta no two Mohammedans in the Bombay Presidency had striven more ably and consciously towards the achievement of the object they upheld sincerely. Some years later in the Karachi Session of 1913, Nawab Syed Mohammed was elected the third Mohammedan President.

Non-Muslim Nationalists

Among the Hindu nationalists there was quite a substantial number of such people whose secular outlook and religious moderation was unchallengeable. Influenced by the advanced Western knowledge and political philosophy acquired through the medium of English and other European languages, they had successfully inculcated a broad scientific approach and retained faith free from religious bigotries. In their writings and speeches they exhorted their fellow countrymen to foster cultural homogeneity and socio-religious cohesion to face the common alien adversary. They constantly appealed to them to evaluate a common rapprochement and an assimilating human conduct identifying with the newly emerging spirit of nationalism and negating the impact of communal animosities, bickerings and conflicts. In a speech delivered at the Congress meeting held at Dacca on 1 October 1883 Babu Surendra Nath Banerjea pointed out:

I deny there is any antagonism whatsoever between the two great races who inhabit this vast continent and who together form the Indian nation. I would appeal to this great gathering of my countrymen and... to Sir Syed Ahmed Khan himself. He is my authority in this matter. In the expressive language of Sir Syed Ahmed Khan, whose present views unhappily are in such direct conflict with the teachings of his life-time, India is like a fair maid with two eyes, one representing the Hindus and the other Mohammedan community. Are we, who are her offspring—Hindus and Mohammedans—to deny to her the right of perfect vision? Is she to use only one eye when both are available?

No, the advancement of India does not mean the advancement of one community to the exclusion of the rest. It means the progressive development of Hindus and Mohammedans alike, bound together by the closest ties of goodwill and amity, and having in view the advancement of the interests of their common country. Our relations are not of yesterday's growth. Behind us looms the history of eight hundred years of goodwill and amity. The records of the world do not present the instance of a wiser or a more beneficent sovereign or one more devoted to the interest of his people than Akbar.²¹

Equally praiseworthy were the endeavours made by Mrs. Annie Besant to weld the indigenous society into a more or less organic whole. Socio-religious order was not equivalent, she pleaded, to the discharge of certain obligations to a particular caste or religion, but it demanded the imbibing of an accommodative spirit by all irrespective of their creed, doctrine or sex, in order to stiffen the outmoded rules of human conduct surviving as a legacy of the conflicting days. In other words, all of them had to evolve a *Weltanschawung* in which the fact of being was to be governed by the popular dictum of all for one and one for all. The release of their pattern of behaviour from the hierarchical values could only pave the way for the growth of the positive phenomenon of nationalism accommodating all sorts of castes, sects and communities. She stated:

The Indian Nation of the future must combine into one coherent and organised body, men of various faiths and men of various races....Hindus and Mussalmans, Parsis and Christians—to say nothing of such well marked inter-Hindu creeds as Jains and Sikhs—have to be welded into a nation, and this...by the broad-minded tolerance and mutual respect which grew out of this recognition....We cannot have a Hindu nation, and a Mussalman nation in India, we must have one Indian nation from the Himalayas to Cape Comorin, from Bengal to Kathiawar.

21. *Speeches and Writings of Surendra Nath Banerjee*, n.6, pp. 267-68.

Recalling the glorious past of India she further stated to eradicate the feelings of separateness and hatred and to develop patriotism and to popularize the feelings of a commonness. She called upon :

We must make the history of India a common history, looking on all her great men as a common glory, in all her heroes as a common heritage. Hindus must learn to be proud of Akbar, Mussulmans of Shivaji. The history must become the story of common Motherland in the making, all parties contributing to the enrichment and sharing in the results.²²

Besides the political leaders there were invited at every annual session of the Indian National Congress eminent poets, writers and philosophers who played their own role in bringing out the cohesion between the various socio-religious elements in India through their poems and essays. They revived the ancient glories and eulogized the endeavours made by their ancestors to achieve the social and political unity of India and to establish cordial relationship between Hindus, Muslims and others in the ancient and medieval periods of Indian history. They also called upon their contemporary generations to do likewise, by following the policies of their ancestors. In the 1901 session of the Congress Sreemati Sarala Devi Chaudhury recited the following verse:

Hare, Hare, Hare—hail Hindustan !
Dadar Harmuzd—Hindustan !
Elahi Akbar—Hindustan !
All hail to Hindustan !
Sing, O my Muse, defeat all party-strife,
Sing thou, sing Hindustan !...
In joy and sorrow let us not be parted,
In aim and effort make us single-hearted²³

22. *Speeches and Writings of Annie Besant* (Madras, G.A. Natesan & Co, 1921, Third edition), pp. 121-27.

23. Song composed and recited by Sreemati Sarala Devi Chaudhury at the Congress Session held in 1901, *Report of the Annual Session of the Indian National Congress held in December, 1901 at Calcutta*, p. 6.

Disintegrating Activities

Such patriotic assertions might have satiated the emotions of Hindus and Muslims alike, but they fell flat when faced by conflicting interests of the upper classes in two communities. It looks that despite their nationalistic overtures the feudal-cum-bourgeois leaders of two communities were somehow or other guided by their communal interests. For instance take the issue of the replacement of Urdu by Hindi as official language in the then United Provinces, which was raised towards the end of the nineteenth century. Knowing fully well that the Muslim feudal and bourgeois intellectuals would resent the adoption of Hindi, the Hindu bourgeois intellectuals committed the blunder of showing impatience and provided an open opportunity to the colonialists to manipulate the situation in their own favour. On the other hand, the Muslim intellectuals like Sir Syed ignored the wellfounded fact that Hindi was the mother tongue of an over-whelming population,—both Hindus and Muslims of the province. Their feeling that replacement of Urdu by Hindi, would derogate the former from the position it had enjoyed for centuries among the elites of society, looked not only superficial but also an open defiance of democratic principles.²⁴ This was the first occasion when Sir Syed felt it was now impossible for the Hindus and Muslims to progress as a single nation and for anyone to work for both of them simultaneously. He said: “During those days when Hindi-Urdu controversy was going on in Benares, one day I met Mr. Shakespeare who was posted there as Divisional Commissioner. I was saying something about the education of Muslims and Mr. Shakespeare was listening with an expression of amazement when, at length, he said. ‘This is the first occasion when I hear you speak about the progress of the Muslims alone. Before this you were always keen about the welfare of your countrymen in general’. I said, ‘Now I am convinced that both these nations will not join wholeheartedly in anything. At present there is no open hostility between the two nations, but on account of the so-called educated people, it will increase immensely in future. He who lives will see’.”²⁵

24. For further study see Ashok Mehta and Achyut Patwardhan, n. 7, pp. 25-6, 61, Rajendra Prasad, *India Divided* (Bombay, Hind Kitabs, 1946), pp. 107-08.

25. Cited by Jamil-ud-Din Ahmad, n. 9, p. 1.

In order to preserve the continuation of Urdu as court language an Urdu Defence Association was established. A meeting of the Association was held at Lucknow on 18 August 1900. Nawab Mohsin-ul-mulk during the course of his address on this occasion said :

Though we do not wield the pen and our pen is not powerful which is why we are seldom seen in offices, yet we have the strength to wield the sword, and our hearts are full of love for the Queen....We cannot for a moment imagine that the Government will forsake and ignore us to allow those things on which our life depends to come to grief. I do not believe that Government will allow our language to die; it will keep it alive. It will never die. But there is no doubt that if the efforts being made by the other side to kill our language continue it may suffer a setback at any time in future. These fears have led us to make these efforts to keep alive our language and, even if we cannot, to take out its funeral bier with great eclat ²⁶

The mutual apprehensions were further intensified by many other developments besides the Hindi-Urdu controversy. Towards the closing years of the 19th century the movement for the prevention of cow-slaughter sponsored largely by sectarian Hindu leaders resulted in violent clashes. They held meetings, made violent speeches and inflamed religious passions which resulted in bloody riots at different places and also in mutual economic boycott. There were also founded cow-protection societies.

There crept in another flaw in India's socio-political life—the extra-territorial loyalty expressed on different occasions by certain sections among Muslims. The working of this phenomenon of extra-territorial loyalty at various stages of Indian political growth during British occupation highlighted the complications that persisted in Indian national life. What made this tendency appearing as a dangerous and complex phenomenon was the fact that it always remained a one-sided affair. Neither Turkey, nor any other Islamic country ruled

by feudal despotism perhaps cared to reciprocate the feelings or displayed any extra interest, or any interest at all, in the day to day tribulations of the Indian Muslims as contrasted from the Hindus of India. However, despite no reciprocal display of sympathy by the West Asian Muslim countries, certain sections among Indian Mussalmans perhaps could never think that their interest was linked more with the national interest of India rather than any other country of West Asia. They could perhaps never develop a pragmatist attitude of separating religion entirely from politics, sometimes under the pressure of their political backwardness due to their late adoption of modern system of education and sometimes solely governed by their vested feudal interests for the maintenance of whose they manipulated the backward classes of Muslims to keep them away from the gradually growing spirit of nationalism attempting the eradication of the alien domination. But on other occasions the aggressive tendencies of the European nationalism also played no less a significant role in disillusioning them from the phenomenon of nationalism itself and enforcing them to emotionally attach with the out-moded conception of Pan-Islamism—an outlook which transcended the geographical boundaries of India.

Equally responsible for generating the vicious tendencies of hatred and contempt among the two major communities of India were certain sections among Hindus who, spellbound by the ancient glories of Aryan days acted in the direction of reviving the era of the pre-Muslim conquest in India. This Hindu revivalism, partly reformist and partly conservative, created suspicion in the minds of Muslims about the virtual return of the Hindus predominance and ascendancy under the pretext of Indian self-Government. Actually speaking, not only the preachers of Arya Samaj, deriving inspiration from the writings of Swami Dayananda, frequently indulged both in press and on the public pulpit, in outrageous attack upon Muslim religion, but the Hindu militant nationalism also gave the appearance of as much anti-British as anti-Muslim. Constant exhortation of Hindu revivalist press that the Hindu youth must prepare to become the incarnation of God Vishnu to eradicate the rule of *mlecchas* i.e. the infidels, Muslims as well as British, created apprehensions in Muslim's mind. Especially provoked by these actions of the Hindus were those upper middle class Muslims who traced their origin from the

Muslim rulers till 1857, and who still persisted in terms of theirs being a ruling race.

During this tumultuous period of communal controversy there came into existence reactionary and anti-nationalist organisations like the *Patriotic Association* and the *Mohammedan Defence Association*. They not only opposed the Congress but also struggled against the introduction of parliamentary institutions in India, simultaneous examinations for the Civil Service, reduction of military expenditure and the Forward Policy culminating in the death and destruction of the Frontier people majority of whom were Muslims, abolition of Salt-Tax, amendment of the Arms Act, so on and so forth.

A few years after the defection of Sir Syed from national movement as late as 11 February 1899 Theodore Beck, the Principal of Mohammedan Anglo-Oriental College, Aligarh, was advising Mr. Franser, Private Secretary to the Viceroy, to transform the said College into a university because it was "an institution that will perform the double task of educating loyal and energetic citizens belonging to the Musalman upper and middle classes....It differs from the proposed Tata Scheme of Bombay in the first of these objects."²⁷

After the death of Mr. Beck there was appointed Morrison as the Principal of the Aligarh College. He openly pointed out to the Muslims the dangerous impact of the introduction of democratic institutions in India. He got a letter published in the *Institute Gazette* in 1901 that—

democratic rule would reduce the minority to the position of hewers of wood and drawers of water....If like the Congress they also started an organisation and demanded their right and the Parliament were to appoint a Commission the Musalmans would not derive as much benefit from it as they would if they were to leave their fate in the hands of Sir Anthony Macdonnell.²⁸

In the same article the author pointed out if the Muslims established any political organisation they would be debarred

27. Home, Education, Progs, November 1901, No.4, p. 5.

28. Tufail Ahmad, n. 3, pp. 336-37.

from the preference displayed by the British Government towards them.

However, all the Musalmans were not to follow the advice of Morrison and Nawab-ul-Mulk. Some of them set up in 1901 a political body known as the *Mohammedan Political Organisation*. But it could not carry on for a longer period.

Partition of Bengal

Communal problem was further aggravated by the partition of Bengal in 1905. The policy initiated by Mr. Beck in the early seventies of the last century was carried to its fulfilment by the colonialists in the first decade of the twentieth century. There is not the slightest element of doubt that in order to perpetuate their rule the colonialists were obviously interested in keeping the Indians divided. Partly for administrative convenience and partly for breaking the power of Bengali Hindu petty-bourgeois classes who then formed the vanguard of independence movement, Lord Curzon partitioned Bengal.

It is true that the national liberation movement got unprecedented impetus after 1857 as a result of partition. But it is also equally true that the agitation against the partition simultaneously alienated a large number of Muslims. How tragic it looks today that the national liberation movement which began in its modern form against the partition of a province, ended in the partition of the whole country on communal lines. Although the agitation against the partition served short-term interests of the Hindu upper strata very effectively, it should, however, be remembered that in the long run it proved harmful to the national cause. The statement delivered in this connection by Nurul Amin, Leader of the Opposition in the Pakistan National Assembly at Dacca on 14 August 1967 deserves notice. He said that the intransigence and shortsightedness of the "Hindu Congress" forced the Muslims of the sub-continent to demand a separate homeland. Nurul Amin was summing up the discussion at a seminar on the causes for the creation of Pakistan, held at the District Bar Library Hall under the auspices of the Madar-i-Millat Memorial Organisation. He observed that "this Hindu intransigence

which was imbedded in their character" was blessing in disguise. They helped to create a state of insecurity in the minds of the Muslims and ultimately compelled the Muslims to demand homeland of their own, he said. He also added the demand for Pakistan came as absolute and final after Muslim leaders failed to reach any arrangement of peaceful coexistence.²⁹

As already stated, at some other place the scheme of partition evoked a storm of protest from the Hindus, particularly their educated middle class. The Hindu lawyers of Calcutta who led the agitation thought that the creation of the new province would mean the setting up of a new High Court which would adversely affect their material interests. The powerful newspapers, owned almost entirely by the Hindus, also apprehended that new newspapers might be started in the new province which would mean reduction in their circulation. The Hindu feudal lords and bourgeoisie all concentrated in and around Calcutta, also felt that they would not have the same opportunities to exploit the poor Muslim population of Eastern Bengal. The Hindu officials apprehended that their monopoly of jobs in the administration might not perpetuate. In short, the generality of the Hindus saw in the new arrangements a blow to the hegemony and dominant position they had built up and enjoyed over vast territories under British patronage since the advent of British rule.

This feeling is conveniently discernible in the following observation of Maharaja Mahendra Chandra Nandi of Qasim Bazar: "In the Province the Mohammedan population would predominate. . the Bengali Hindu would be in a minority. We shall be strangers in our own land. I dread the prospect and the outlook fills me with anxiety as to the future of our race."³⁰ The Maharaja conveniently forgot that Bengal with a 77.7 per cent Hindu majority would still be larger than Eastern Bengal. His line of argument displayed that Muslims should not be permitted to enjoy majority rights even in areas where they constituted the majority. The Hindus considered themselves a separate race and strangers vis-a-vis the Muslims.

29. *The Pakistan Times*, 17 August 1967, p. 8, col.7.

30. Cited by Jami-ud-Din Ahmad, "Partition of Bengal", *Pakistan Times* (Lahore), 20 August 1967, magazine section, p. 1.

A large number of Muslims who favoured the partition of Bengal based their plea on the extensive character of the province of Bengal which could be formed from the fact that it comprised an area of 184,000 square miles with a population of 78,000,000, the result being that the administration of Eastern Bengal suffered. Its communications system remained undeveloped and its unguarded waterways were infested by pirates. Very little heed was paid to education and public works. The peasants groaned under the exactions of the oppressive agents of absentee landlords. Public administration was weak and ineffective, as the attention of the Government was concentrated on Calcutta and neighbouring districts. The Muslims who constituted the majority in Eastern Bengal were the worst sufferers from this state of affairs.

One should keep in view that the Muslims themselves had not demanded partition of province. It came to them unexpectedly as a boon, and they obviously welcomed it. They felt rightly or wrongly that under the new arrangements it would be convenient for Government to devote more care to the specific problems and requirements of the Muslims and they, as members of backward community, would get the much required opportunity to improve their lot. A study of their feelings is made at a later stage.

Inference should not, however, be drawn that all the Muslims were unanimously opposed to the Congress agitation against the partition. There certainly existed some sections among them who could rise above the communal considerations, and thought, above all, in terms of national interest.

There were no less than 259 anti-partition demonstrations held in connection with the celebration of 16 October—when the scheme of Partition was implemented—as a day of national mourning, in 1906. Out of this 259, at 135 meetings both the Hindus and Mahomedans co-operated. Besides, the most important meetings held in Calcutta, Dacca, Faridpur and Mymen Singh in those days were presided by the leading Muslims like Khan Bahadur Moulvi Mahomed Yusuf, Nawab Athikulla and a number of other people having good influence in their community. Speaking at the Congress session in 1905 a Muslim delegate, Abdul Kassim protested against the partition and ridiculed the Muslim organizations favouring

the division by drawing a simile with the parrot in the cage repeating his master's voice. He stated:

These associations justify their existence, engineered and pioneered as they are by Government officials and quasi-officials by simply supporting Government measures. Their conduct reminds one of the well-known verse of the Persian poet which translated literally, would mean "that they have kept me like a parrot behind the screen, and I repeat what my master has taught me, and like a gramophone I repeat my master's voice". Gentlemen, I want to know if these associations, which pretend to exist for the thinking out and the carrying out of measures for the amelioration of the members of their own community, do not feel ashamed that they should support a measure which they are told would help in raising the status of the Mahomedan community.... But may I ask these associations or their leaders how is it that they, who have set together for the last fifty years thinking over the means of amelioration of their co-religionists, never had the idea that such a measure would improve their condition? They do not feel ashamed to acknowledge that the idea should have occurred to Lord Curzon and not to them.³¹

Criticizing the approach of Lord Curzon the speaker continued:

The Government of Lord Curzon said that the agitation will subside as soon as the partition is made. But it has not subsided.... If you continue the agitation they say that the country is almost in a state of revolt.³²

Again it was Nawab Khaja Athikulla, the brother of Nawab Salimullah of Dacca, who moved the resolution against the Partition of Bengal at 1906 session of the Indian National Congress. Amidst the loud and continued cheers and with

31. *Report of the annual proceedings of the National Congress in 1905*, p. 69.

32. *Ibid.*

slogans of "Allaho Akbar" and "Marhaba Nawab" raised by the assembled delegates and spectators Nawab Athikulla proclaimed emphatically:

I may tell you, at once that, it is not correct that the Musslamans of Eastern Bengal, as a body, are in favour of the partition of Bengal. The real fact is that, it is only a few leading Mahomedans, who for their own purposes, supported the measure,³³

He believed:

To support partition is to lay an axe at our feet, for partition means an enormous cost and the people are not able to bear this heavy burden. At least to save ourselves from this cost, the Hindus and Musselmans should continue to enter a united protest against the measure.³⁴

Referring to the reverse situation created by partition for both the religious communities he stated:

Partition is a great wrong done both to Hindus and Mussalmans and it should be revoked.... There is no doubt that Mahomedans and Hindus are the two eyes of India. It is hardly necessary to say that if you injure the one, you injure the other. As a late distinguished Mahomedan said, "We should try to be one in heart and soul, and act in unison. If united, we can support each other, if not, the effect of the one against the other will tend to the destruction and downfall of both." Gentlemen, that has ever been the policy of the Khawaja family of Dacca.³⁵

The Hindu leaders also gave a full response to this Muslim co-operation. To maintain the unity in the movement they requested the Muslims to be cautious of the alien manouverings. Speaking at 1906 session of the Congress Babu Surendra Nath Banerjea appealed in eloquent style:

33. *Ibid*, p. 71,

34. *Ibid*.

35. *Ibid*.

We ought to be on our guard against the machinations of the intriguers who are the enemies of Hindus and Mahomedans alike. The number of Mahomedans present at this meeting is...more than two hundred. You will be pleased to hear that we have hundred Mahomedan volunteers out of three hundred.... Speaking for myself as a member of the Hindu community, I desire to tell my Mahomedan fellow-countrymen that we notice with satisfaction the political ferment which we witness in the great Islamic community in India.³⁶

Assuring them of the full co-operation by the Hindus he stated:

From us Hindus, you will receive nothing but sympathy and co-operation, for, we recognise that you are brothers linked to us by an inseparable destiny. Hindus and Mahomedans, let us stand on a common platform--may it not be the platform of this Congress.³⁷

The national-minded elements both among Hindus and Muslims felt that partition had hindered the natural progress of the people, that it had undone the labours of a hundred years. The following extract from the speech of Babu Surendra Nath Banerjea delivered at the 1906 session of the Congress, reflected these sentiments of the people in Bengal:

There is no feeling deeper in the heart of the Bengalee than that which is associated with the home and which gathers round the domestic circle. The Bengalee, be he a Hindu or a Mahomedan, feels the strong repugnance to the breaking-up of his home; he relents with a fanaticism which is religious in its intensity. With equal pain and resentment does he view this separation from himself of his kith and kin, by the formation of a separate legislature and a separate Government.³⁸

Similar emphatic protest came from the Central Mahomedan Association in Calcutta, whose secretary Nawab Ameer

36. *Speeches and Writings of Surendra Nath Banerjea*, n. 6, p. 123.

37. *Ibid.*

38. *Report of the Congress Session in 1906*, pp. 72-3.

Hossain, in submitting the Association's opinion to the alien regime, observed:

My committee are of opinion that no portion of the Bengali-speaking race should be separated from Bengal without the clearest necessity for such separation and they think in the present case such necessity does not exist.³⁹

The *Fortnightly Reports* on the anti-partition agitation and *Swadeshi* movement in Bengal and Eastern Bengal and Assam submitted by Secretary to the Government of Bengal to the Under Secretary of State for India on 3 January, 1901 shows that a meeting was held in Calcutta [in November 1906] under the presidency of Maulvi D.M. Sohail-ud-Din, to discuss the establishment of a new Muhammedan Association. This Association was being created to establish unity between the Hindus and Muhammadans. In the meeting it was resolved that:

The promoters of Association...cannot ignore the fact that the Muhammedans are a factor-and an important factor-of the Indian public, and as such they share in an equal degree the prosperity or the adversity of the Indian people.... In all other matters, the Association ...will be able to co-operate with the other communities in their efforts for the general improvement in the condition of the Indian people. The promoters of the Association believe that the true interest of the Muhammedans lies in the growth of friendly relations between the different sections of the Indian community and harmony of feelings and actions between them.⁴⁰

Besides, a significant number of Muslims also actively participated in the organization of demonstrations and public meetings. On the 9 November 1906 a very large meeting was held in Raja Bahadur's Haveli, in Barisal. About 4,000 persons attended, of whom 300 were Mahomedans. Abdul Gafur, one of the most active and national-minded Muslims, delivered a speech on "The King and his Subjects". He started by

39. Home Public Deposit, Progs. October 1906, No. 237, p. 6.

40. Home Public -A, Progs. January 1907, Nos. 262-63. (Confdl.), p.8.

saying that formally there were disputes among Hindus and Mahomedans regarding superiority of castes, but now situation had changed and such distinctions were lost sight of in the general endeavour to improve the welfare of their "motherland". In his speech he also compared the story of the Mahabharat and Abhimanyu (who was surrounded and murdered by seven heroes of the day) with India and the European powers. Continuing his speech he further stated:

The Indians have been showing Government what is unholy, illegal and unbecoming by petitions and representations, but the Government is persistent and is not hearing them.... The tears of the natives of India formed streams which flowed into the ocean, but their cries had not reached the ears of the King. Far from listening to the cries, the rulers (officials) were trying to put them down in every way.... If the partition meant good for the country no one would protest, but it had been brought about to the benefit of the English and they alone would gain. So they must go on protesting strongly.⁴¹

Referring to the economic distress of the people he stated that the people protested against the imposition of heavy road and public works cesses. But the Government pacified them by declaring that the amount would be spent in the excavation of tanks, the making of roads and the alleviation of famine, etc; but these pledges had not been fulfilled. Instead of assisting the famine-stricken persons, the officials ridiculed the idea of a famine and said so long as there were leaves on the trees there could be no famine. Deprecating the perpetuation of the minority rule over the majority he stated in a forceful language:

In India the proportion of Europeans to Indians is as 1 is to 6 lakhs so that one European ruled over six lakhs of Indians. If the latter were each to give a slap to the Europeans then each European would receive six lakhs of slaps.⁴²

41. Home Public—A, Progs. February 1907, No. 265, (Confdl), pp. 12-14.

42. Ibid.

In his speech he also spotlighted the foul means adopted by the alien regime to bring India under their domination in the past. He explained:

India was conquered by deceit and not by the sword: The Nawab Sirajud Dowlah was dethroned by unfair means and his character wrongly impeached.... Clive hanged Nand Kumar Mukherji for perjury, but for the same offence he was made a Lord.⁴³

In his long address he also alluded to Sir B. Fuller's speech and said that Government had now abandoned its old Hindu wife with whom it had spent the better part of its life, being enchanted by the beauty and youth of the new Muslim wife, but the toothless old husband (Sir B. Fuller) had gone away leaving both. In conclusion he disapproved the British oppression when he stated:

Europeans are oppressing us in every way.... The modesty of our mothers and sisters has and is being outraged in trains and steamers.... The Europeans are absorbing our blood and there is no reason why should we suffer all this.⁴⁴

Like the Hindu leaders the Muslim participants also appealed for the maintenance of communal unity and the necessity of mutual co-operation. Abdul Ghafur, in his speech at Bhola in December, 1906, stated, "if a fire breaks out in a Mohomedan's house, his Hindu neighbours were to help him to extinguish it. Emerson and Kemp would not do this. Therefore, they should live together and work for the good of the country." Reviving the past glories the speaker contended that in ancient times there prevailed no ill-feeling between Hindus and Mahomedans. During the rule of the latter many Hindus fought for Muslims and lost their lives. Many Hindu historians had eulogized prominent Muslim rulers of Bengal like Serajudoulah as sincere characters, while the English historians considered them nothing less than "monsters".⁴⁵

43. Ibid.

44. Ibid.

45. Home Public - A, Progs. File 1907, No. 265 (Confdl), p. 14.

In another speech delivered in December, 1906 at Patua Khali in East Bengal he stated that it was a false promise that Muslims would get better appointments under the government by the continuation of partition. Instead developments had taken place the other way round after partition. Most of the prominent positions were given to the Hindus, Mr. Ghose was appointed Chief Justice; Mr. Sinha, officiating Advocate General, and Mr. Gupta, officiating Judge of the High Court. If the Government liked to patronize the Muslims, it could have done it long ago, without making the partition.⁴⁶ Thus all temptations and promises of providing superior government posts to Muslims had proved a farce. They must remember how often Viceroys and Lieutenant-Governors had told them, "you must first deserve and then desire." There were no separate laws for the two communities.⁴⁷

Besides Abdul Ghafur there were quite a significant number of nationalist and politically conscious Muslim leaders who rendered valuable services to the cause of nationalism in India. Forgetting their old religious and communal differences they actively co-operated with their Hindu co-organizers, accompanied by Hindu nationalists made extensive tours of the areas densely populated by the Muslims, exhorted the Muslim masses to unify their rank and file, and join the movement against the partition. They told them that for generations Hindus and Muslims had lived together in peace, but by the dismemberment of their province the alien rule was throwing an apple of discord in their midst. The Muslim masses, though not all of them, gave a favourable response to the call of these nationalist leaders. In an extract from the Eastern Bengal and Assam Police Abstract, dated 22 December 1906, was admitted:

The political agitator Abdul Ghafur who is reported to have delivered *swadeshi* lectures at Sirajganj at the end of October was accompanied by Maulvis Hedayat Bux of Daeca and Abdul Hamid Khan of Tangail, Mymen Singh. These *swadeshi* and anti-partition Muhammedan preachers were brought to Sirajganj to counteract the influence of the local Maulvis who or-

46. Ibid, p. 11.

47. Ibid.

ganised the pro-partition demonstrations on the 16th October last.... Maulvi Hedayat Bux in a fiery speech called the Nawab of Dacca the *Shikandi* of Government.⁴⁸

The *Fortnightly Reports* regarding the anti-partition agitation and *Swadeshi* movement submitted in February 1907 by Secretary to the Government of Bengal to under Secretary of State for India refers to a meeting held on 5 November 1906 at Magura in the Khulna District at which between 2,000 to 3,000 people were reported to have been present, of whom a large proportion were Muhammedans. The leaders Maulvi Liakat Husain and Babu Bipin Chandra Pal addressed the meeting. The former said, "The Muhammedans were really the losers by the partition since they formed two-thirds of the population and would have to bear two-thirds of the extra cost of administration." He also stated that Lord Curzon had misled the Home Government by suppressing the petition of those Muslim Zamindars who were against the partition. Bipin Chandra Pal then spoke in Bengali. He stated:

Both Hindus and Muhammedans were born in the same land, which was not mere earth, but the remains of their forefathers who had died and been changed to earth. The meaning of *Bande Matram* was "Worship the Mother", which meant the land. We shall...not remain under oppression which was against the law.... Everyone should be prepared to die for the improvement of this country. Fathers and mothers should be prepared to sacrifice their sons, and when this spirit has entered each one of us, then we shall be able to obtain what ambition is.... The partition had been affected to weaken our strength and talents.... The partition will only be a mere imaginary line if Hindus and Muhammedans work in unity.⁴⁹

In the same report was also stated that Babu Aswini Kumar Dutt of Barisal on 18 November paid a visit to Dhamura in the Backergunj district where a meeting of about 1,000

48. Home Public—A, Progs. January 1907, Nos. 262-63 (Confdl), p. 10.

49. Home Public—A, Progs. February 1907, Nos. 152-54 (Confdl.), pp. 5-7 & 9.

persons of whom 300 were Muhammedans, was held. In that meeting "hot lectures" on the benefit of boycotting foreign goods, stating that English cloth, sugar and salt were manufactured with the help of ingredients obnoxious to Hindus and Muhammadans, were delivered. Besides, there was held meeting at Bhola in the Backergunj district attended by about 500 people including 100 Muhammadans.⁵⁰

Besides Athikulla, Abdul Ghafur, Maulvi Hedayat Bux and Liakat Husain among the nationalist-minded Muslim leaders in Bengal, the names of Maulvi Didar Bakhsh, Maulvi Muhammad Yusuf Khan Bahadur, Maulvi Abdul Husain and a number of others will be remembered by the posterity with great reverence. In an emergent situation faced by the entire country after the national upsurge of 1857-58, they stood for unity and harmony between the two major communities of India and called upon their co-religionists to endeavour for the unification of Bengal. And to a certain extent they succeeded in persuading their co-religionists to participate in the movement. The services rendered by these people for the cause of national integration had been duly recognized even by the alien regime in one of its *Fortnightly Reports*.⁵¹

In another extract from the abstract of *Reports* regarding anti-partition agitation during the first half of December 1906 was stated:

Maulvi Abdual Husain, another of the Calcutta professional agitators, has been active in the Tippera district, where in the course of his lectures, he appealed to Hindus and Muhammedans to combine and boycott foreign-made articles and stated that famines were brought about by the heavy taxation imposed by the Government of India; that famines were unknown in former times; that during the Muhammedan dynasty of 700 years there was only one famine...when the Emperor Akbar helped the people substantially; that during the British occupancy there had been 18 famines in 25 years and yet the Government were passive; and that

50. Ibid, p. 10.

51. For further study see Home Public—A, Progs. February 1907, No. 265 (Confidential), p. 5.

the present death-rate, due to famine, is 6,362 per lakh.⁵²

At certain places in Bengal the Hindu volunteers dressed like Muslims, visited the local fairs and bazzars and endeavoured to persuade the Mussalman frequenters of the fair to join them in the boycott movement.⁵³

To inspire the general mass of people for the Swadeshi the leaders like Bipin Chandra Pal and S.N. Banerjea addressed public meetings in the grounds of mosques in places like Purulia in Manbhum district. Similarly Muslim leaders addressed the congregations in Hindu houses. Hindu leaders eulogized the Moghul rulers like Akbar and Shahjehan, their counterparts in Muslims glorified the heroes of *Ramayana* and *Mahabharat* like Rama and Abhimanyu and the Rajput heroes of later period. Addressing a gathering at Dacca on 18 December, 1906 Ekram Husain of Burdwan, referred to the heroic deeds of the 22 Rajput youths headed by Badal. On hearing the voice coming from the temple of the guardian deity of the country "*Mai bhuka hai*" and that her hunger would be satisfied by their "blood", they "vowed solemnly to shed the same" and their subsequent deeds of valour caused Alla-ud-din to raise the siege in admiration of their conduct. The Speaker advised his audience to vow similarly to "shed the last drop of their blood" in the *swadeshi* cause, and explained that it was not their own actual blood that they were to shed but their selfishness in adopting the *swadeshi* goods, owing to its high price in favour of the cheaper foreign goods. He compared the British to a skin-worm (disease) which is never scotched till soap or some pungent substance be applied to the skin. He advised them to apply the pungent substance of the boycott and *swadeshi*, which alone would cause the cure, by its effect on the "British pocket".⁵⁴

Continuing further he emphasized the importance of the only worship which would propitiate the "Mother" (India). He said:

52. Ibid.

53. Home Public—A, Progs. June, 1907, Nos. 277-279 (Confdl), p. 9.

54. Ibid, p. 21.

- . She would not be satisfied with the sacrifice of goats and buffaloes, but they must sacrifice themselves and their children. The Mother's thirst would not be satisfied save by the hot blood of her children.⁵⁵

Continuing his speech he also gave an allegorical description of India as she was when the British first came to trade and as she was under British rule. He drew a picture of India of old as a royal lady, dressed in gorgeous apparel, sitting on a golden throne with a terrible lion grovelling before her, licking her feet. In her hands she held an immensely frightening serpent which was coiled round a fierce buffalo. Two beautiful boys were seated on her lap. He explained that this was India with the British lion licking her feet to obtain trading concessions. The serpent was her strength by which she held the Afghan buffalo in restraint. The boys were the Hindus and Mahamedan nations. He described India of the present day as a "thin, emaciated woman, dressed in the tattered garments of a beggar, lying in a vast deserted field, strewn with carcasses and bones." The serpent was now coiled round her own body, the lion was growling at her head, the buffalo was glancing fiercely at her from one side, a bear with a torn and bloody cheek was watching for his turn from a neighbouring hill, and a huge vulture was sweeping down on her from the east. He explained that this was India confined by her own strength under the "thralldom" of the British. Continuing further he stated:

In an island in the north-east, a royal damsel (Japan) of 13, was sitting on a throne with a trident in her hand, and was now calling to the two boys asleep near their wretched mother. One of the boys had awakened and was endeavouring to assist his mother and to arouse his brother, the latter however only moved his body but still kept his eyes closed.

In the same speech the speaker also urged his audience to follow Japan's example and to revive the ancient arts and industries of India and to boycott all foreign goods. He added:

55. Ibid, pp. 20-21.

John Bull's heart was in his pocket and to get any favour from him, his pocket must be squeezed.... Rebellion would some day follow, not in India, but in England, where, owing to the boycott and the *Swadeshi* movement in India, the English working classes would rebel and compel... Mr. Morley to unsettle the settled fact of the partition.⁵⁶

Muslim-Support to Swadeshi and Boycott

On the 11th instant a meeting was held (at Bhola in Eastern Bengal) in which Abdul Rehman, a talukdar of Chor Hoggla was made president. People comprising *mukhtears*, pleaders, their clerks, shop-keepers, petty talukdars, school boys, the head pandit of the local school, some petty cultivators and a few prostitutes; in all 400 Hindus and 100 Mahomedans attended it. Hosen Ali, a pleader of Bhola Munsiff's Court, Abdul Bepari and Momtazuddin were the prominent men. In order to get a good Mahomedan audience the lecture to be given by Abdul Ghafur was announced earlier by the beat of the drums. Eulogizing the cause of *Swadeshi* in the meeting Abdul Ghafur stated:

The salt they used was injurious to their health and it was evident that the bones of kine were taken from India to purify salt, and often pieces of bone were found in it. When salt was imported by steamer from Liverpool, fresh beef and pork were kept in it to preserve the same. Often small clods like ashes were imbedded with salt. These were due to the blood from the meat preserved in the salt. Such salt, therefore, would not be eaten either by Hindus or Mahomedans. They should use Karkatch and Shandub salt which is not so adulterated.

Condemning the use of other foreign made articles he observed that English coloured cloths were injurious to the weavers, as poisonous ingredients were used in colouring them and in sizing such the fat of swine was used. So Mahomedans should not use the cloths. *Bilati* (English) wraps were also

56. Ibid, p. 20. For further study see also Home Public—A, Progs. February 1907, No. 265, pp. 9-12.

not so lasting as *deshi* (country-made) ones. Criticizing the use of foreign sugar and utensils he further stated:

English sugar was... purified with animal blood, and by its use several people have suffered from venereal diseases. English enamelled pots and pans were harmful and as soon as the enamel fell off they became useless. Country made brass utensils should be used, whichever when broken realized the price of the metal.⁵⁷

On 13th instant there was held a meeting at Ramganj ports. About 125 persons attended, 40 Hindus and the rest Muslims. In his speech Abdul Ghafur explained that the use of foreign articles was *haram*. In the meeting held at Kaliganj *hat* there were about 200 Muslims present. In still another meeting held at Dowla on the 14th instant Amanullah, a petty cultivator, was elected president.⁵⁸

Likewise Maulvi Abdul Husain had been holding meetings in the Dacca district and lecturing on the boycott. At Naraingunj before an audience of 500 persons, including 50 Muhammadans (in a meeting held during the second half of December, 1906) he censured the pleaders, *mukhtears*, and local practitioners for not charging higher rates to those merchants who dealt in foreign goods.⁵⁹

In Chittagong Abdul Ghafur delivered a lecture on 16 March 1907 in which he said, "The people wanted self-Government and to drive those uneducated foreigners back to the other side of the seas."⁶⁰ In Rajshahi Abdul Hussain lectured in the interior of the district. one Uma Charan Banerji from Barisal did the same with success. At Dinajpur Surendra Nath Banerjea held a meeting and was presented with an address. Abdul Ghafur made a violent speech, in which an attempt was made to excite the sympathies of Muhammedans against the English on the ground that the latter had done much to injure the Sultan of Turkey.⁶¹ At a large meeting

57. Home Public—A, Progs, February 1907, No. 265 (Confdl), p. 14.

58. Ibid, p. 15.

59. Ibid, p. 18.

60. Home Public—A, Progs. May 1907, Nos. 155-56 (Confdl), p. 4.

61. Ibid.

held in the Raja Bahadur's Haveli in Backarganj Basanta Kumar Gupta, formerly a *Mukhtear*, alluding to Hindus and Muhammadan differences urged both parties in future to realise that it was the authorities who were responsible and "instead of killing one another they should kill the authorities."⁶²

The services rendered by the Muslim nationalist intelligentsia were highly appreciated by the politically conscious forces all over the country: their writings and speeches were flashed in the newspapers, periodicals and journals. Their sacrifices and sufferings were unequivocally eulogized and praised publicly. On the arrest of Maulvi Leakat Hossain, the *Navasakti* on 30 January 1908, paid tribute to him in the following words:

Well, go then, Maulvi; though a Musalman, you have now attained the place of a Brahmin which is the pre-eminent position in Hindu society, crores and crores of *Pronams* (i.e. salutes) to your feet. May your devotion to your country, your spirit, your fearlessness, your disinterested self-sacrifice, be an example to all; may your example fill with the idea of duty to the country the lives of crores and crores of servants of the country, both in the Hindu and in the Musalman community.⁶³

In April 1907 Rajshahi (Eastern Bengal) was visited by Surendra Nath Banerjea, accompanied by J. Choudhuri and Pandit Kali Prosanna Kabyabisarad and Maulvi Didar Baksh. The party was received, admitted the official sources, with much vigour. The visit was interpreted to have provided much enthusiasm and considerable impetus to the *swadeshi* movement in an area which was formerly considered to be indifferent towards it.⁶⁴

The Muslim participation in the movement did not remain confined to Bengal only. Muslims in other parts also supported the movement in considerable strength. Suffice it is to

62. *Ibid*, p. 5.

63. *Report (Part II) on Native-owned English Newspapers in Bengal for the Week ending 1 February, 1908* (confdl), No. 5, p. 243.

64. *Home Public—A, Progs. June, 1907, Nos. 277-79* (confdl), p. 7.

quote two illustrations from the northern India. According to a communication published in the *Vakil* (Amritsar) dated 18 April 1907 the local Muhammadans, who held themselves aloof from the *swadeshi* movement at first, had started joining it openly in 1907.⁶⁵ A Hyderabad correspondent writing to the *Paisa Akhbar* (Lahore) dated the 27 December 1905, deprecated the attempts made by certain Muhammadans to dissuade their co-religionists from joining the *swadeshi* movement. The movement, he added, was a very useful one. The fact of some "Congresswallas being among the staunch supporters" of the propaganda was no reason "why Musalmans should stand aloof from it."⁶⁶

• There was a considerable section among the Muslims which preferred a commodity manufactured by a Hindu to one made by a Turkish, Kabuli or Arabian Syed. In fact, it was never questioned who manufactured it — a Hindu or a Muslim—so long as it was manufactured in India.

Muslim Opposition

To conclude, however, from these developments that the entire Muslim community participated in the movement and it acquired a cent per cent national character, would be violating the objectivity. The fact was that the Muslims participated in this national struggle only partially. Quite a powerful section of the Muslims remained either indifferent or openly hostile to the movement leaving ample scope for the movement to be dominated by the Hindus to a larger extent and thus outwardly giving it an appearance of Hindu Movement. There were a number of reasons responsible. Since the defection of Sir Syed Ahmad Khan from the nationalist movement quite a considerable number of Muslims had become loyalist to the alien regime. And as the *swadeshi* movement had been conceived in a spirit of hostility to the British Government the loyalist elements among Muslims became indifferent, if not actually hostile, to the nationalist movement. They tried to persuade their co-religionists that they should have nothing

65. *Selections from the Native Newspapers published in the Punjab received upto 30 May 1907 (Confidential)*, Vol. XX, No. 19, p. 149.

66. *Selections from the Native Newspapers published in the Punjab received upto 6 January, 1906 (Confidential)* Vol. XIX, No. 1, p. 8.

to do with the *swadeshi* programme. In its issue dated 23 November 1905 the *Curzon Gazette* edited by Mirza Hajrat in Delhi, commented that the "Mutiny" of 1857 was organised by Hindus but it was the "Prophet's followers", who were "foolish" enough to join in it, who suffered very greatly. Likewise, if the *swadeshi* movement also gradually assumed an "alarming" aspect, Muslims would be the first persons to be involved in trouble.⁶⁷

Moreover, the very success of the *swadeshi* movement would have culminated — as it actually did later on — in the annulment of the Bengal partition. This, in its turn, would have led to the foregoing by the Muslims of Eastern Bengal the facilities in the sphere of education and the abandonment of the efforts being made by them to avail a fair share of public appointments. The *Watan* (Lahore) dated 15 March 1907 had observed that no "sensible" Muhammadan could deny that the bifurcation of Bengal was a "veritable blessing to the Prophet's followers." They formed the majority of the population in the new province. In pre-partition days they used to be treated as "pariahs". But now the situation had reversed. "It was, therefore", the Journal continued, "denying facts for a Muslim to assert that the division of Bengal was calculated to prove injurious to the interest of his co-religionists."⁶⁸

Keeping these facts in view a considerable section of the Muslims, opposed the *swadeshi* movement. The *Paisa Akhbar* (Lahore) of the 31 December 1906, edited by "Mahbub" Alam published a communication in which the writer condemned the manner in which the *swadeshi* movement was being conducted, and advised Muhammadans to have nothing to do with the agitation. "Indeed Hindus do not wish", the writer stated, "Musalmans well, and the latter should never join the former in their political propaganda."⁶⁹

Last, but not the least significant, factor that led the Muslims away from the movement, was the provocative techni-

67. Ibid.

68. *Selections from the Native Newspapers published in the Punjab received upto 23rd March, 1907* (Confdl), Vol. XX, No. 12, p. 75.

69. *Selections from the Native Newspapers published in the Punjab received upto 5 January, 1907*, (Confdl), Vol. XX, No.1, p.7.

ues used by the Hindu volunteers and workers against the Muslims during the course of the movement. For instance, on the occasion of a *Mela* (fair) held in a Muslim predominated area there appeared on the scene the *swadeshi* volunteers armed with lathis. On their failure to induce the shopkeepers through persuasion and argument they attempted to enforce the boycott by ordering withdrawal from sale of all foreign goods. On the refusal of the Muslim shopkeepers they used violent means extending to actual intimidation and rudeness against the shopkeepers and forcibly snatching away articles when exposed for sale. The use of force resulted in violent collisions between the Hindu volunteers and Muslim shopkeepers and villagers. Besides, there also appeared provocative hand-written notices against the Muslims. In the Backerganj district the manuscript notices were pasted up in the different parts of the town. The following are the translations of such two notices:

- (1) Muhammadans! If you will not shout "Bande Mataram" then go as the servants of the English and travel in foreign countries in *feringhee* dress.
- (2) I am telling you... Muhammadans, to follow the example of Hindus, otherwise you will feel the consequences.⁷⁰

All these activities of the Hindu secterians alienated the Muslims from the movement. At a meeting of about 2000 Muhammadans held in the Barasat Sub-division of the 24-Pergannahs district, in December 1906, two Muslim preachers in the course of their discourse exhorted all the Muslims to sever connection with Hindus and not to join in any undertaking with them.⁷¹ Similar Muslim meetings were held in the Mymensingh district at which the people were urged to break off all connections with the Hindus and not to borrow money from them.⁷²

In fact there had grown up considerable section among Muslim population which had come to believe that one of the

70. Home Public—A, Progs. January 1907, Nos. 262-63 (Confdl), p. 12.

71. Home Public—A, Progs. February 1907, No.265 (Confdl), p. 5.

72. Home Public—A, Progs. May 1907, Nos. 155-56, (Confdl), pp. 4-5.

most significant reasons for the decline of Muslim community was the social intercourse with the Hindus. Detailing this point the adherents of this group had stated:

By going to the Pujas, funeral ceremonies, marriages, etc., of Hindus; by giving subscriptions or other assistance to these things; by helping in the *Chaitra-Sankranti* celebrations, the *Baruni* bathing, the *Ashtami* bathing, the *Srabani* vows, the *Durga* festival or procession, by reading along with the Hindus in *Pathshalas* and schools; ...by learning the manners and customs of Hindus... Muhammadans become heathens, By acting as *lathials*, peons or labourers to Hindus the Muhammadans are ... heaping up sins.... They (Hindus) keep the ignorant in poverty.⁷³

A better substantial evidence of bad feeling between the two communities had been the pasting up of placards inviting an attack by Muslims on Hindus in many places. In Faridpur and later on all over the country a "Red Pamphlet" had been found in circulation which contained abuse of Hindus and incitement to Muslims to cease to have any relations with them. It contended:

Musalmans! Awake . . On no account study along with Hindus. Open Muhammadan places of business; do not buy things from Hindu shops.. . Do not touch goods made by Hindus; do not give posts under you to Hindus; do not be bound by the bad ideas of Hindus . If you could acquire knowledge, then in one single day we could send all the Hindus to Gehenna (sic). See! in Bengal you are in majority; you are the cultivators; agriculture is the foundation of all wealth. Where did the Hindus get their wealth? They have not an iota of wealth of their own. The Hindus by cunning have taken your wealth.... If you could only learn their cunning and acquire knowledge, the Hindus in one day would either die from want of food, or would become Muhammadans! ... The basic intention

73. *The Selections from the Native Newspapers published in the Punjab received upto 15 June 1907 (Confidential)*, Vol. XX, No. 24, p. 215.

of the Hindus is to keep the Muhammadans for ever under their feet.⁷⁴

At a meeting held in the Pabna during the second half of December 1906 Muhammadans were urged not to purchase clothes on Hindu holiday but to do so at the time of the Id and other Muhammadan festivals, also not on any account to boycott British goods.⁷⁵

At Jessore the Muslims organized a movement to boycott all Hindu confectioners and sent emissaries into the district to instruct Muslim labourers, nurses, midwives and cartsmen not to serve Hindus. They also resented the raising of the *Bande Matram* slogan.⁷⁶

The growth of this hostility often culminated in communal riots.

To counteract the impact of *swadeshi* the hostile section among Muslims did not feel satisfied only with severing of relations with the Hindus. It planned to organize a counter-movement of its own. To provide impetus to the followers of the new movement certain poems were composed, slogans like "The curse of God be on the enemies of the meeting" were popularized, notices on the walls were pasted, and pamphlets and leaflets were circulated. In Eastern Bengal there was produced the famous "Red Pamphlet" which provided the genesis of the new Muslim movement exploiting the economic differences between two communities. It read:

What a glorious day has arrived! The Hindus have begun a great agitation, saying that the rupees of the country are going away to Europe. We also have begun an agitation, and have held many meetings, saying that the Hindus by various devices are taking away almost all the wealth required by the Musalmans. Every Musalman of this country should join in such agitation and should attend such meetings — for by

74. Ibid, p. 216.

75. Home Public A, Progs. February 1907, No. 265 (Confdl), p. 6.

76. Ibid, p. 6.

such agitation on behalf of our own race will certainly come the uplifting of the Muhammadans. The Hindus have called their agitation the 'Swadeshi' agitation. We have called our agitation the 'Swajati' agitation—the agitation for our own race.⁷⁷

It is equally interesting to note that the chief supporter of the Bengal partition was Nawab Khwaja Salimullah of Dacca who freely gave his time, energy and money to make the scheme a success. He and his associates decided to organise the Muslims and set up an association which would voice their views on social and political matters and protect their communal interests. The *Mohammedan Provincial Union* thus came into being with Nawab Salimullah as its patron. He spoke of the prospects the new Government afforded Muslims and the impetus which its formation promised to the advancement of his community.⁷⁸ The partition of Bengal was welcomed even by the Muslims of Calcutta who did not stand to gain anything directly from the measure. The Mohammedan Literary Society of Calcutta declared that the measure not only ensured general administrative advantages but was also a boon to the Muslims. It therefore, urged the Muslims to support the policy of Government and abstain from joining any agitation against partition.⁷⁹

The fact that the separatist trend among Muslims gained considerable support can also be judged from the decline of the strength of the Muslim delegates attending congress sessions in those days. At the Benares Congress held in 1905, only 17 delegates out of a total number of 756, were Muslims.

77. *Selections from the Native Newspapers published in the Punjab received upto 15 June 1907* (Confdl), Vol. XX, No. 24, p. 214.

The separatist trend among Muslims was also encouraged by Lord Curzon who, obsessed with the idea of partition, toured the whole of East Bengal to win over Muslim support for his scheme, met prominent Muslims and addressed Muslim masses in public meetings to tell them that one of the main purposes of his scheme was to create a Muslim province in which Islam and its adherents would be in a dominating position. He said that the partition "would give the Muslims of East Bengal a unity which they had never enjoyed since the time of the old Muslim subedars and Emperors". [Cited by S. Abid Husain, n. 10, p. 54].

78. Cited by Jami-ud-Din Ahmad, "Partition of Bengal", n. 30, p. 2.

79. *Ibid.*

All-India Muslim League

The intensification of the national liberation movement after the partition of Bengal came in conflict with the British strategy of political counterpoise between various Indian communities and nationalities to maintain its paramount power. Giving a reference to the apprehension created in the mind of the Prince of Wales who had shortly returned to England after his royal visit to India, Lord Morley, then Secretary of State for India, wrote a letter to the Viceroy, Lord Minto, on 11 May 1906. In this letter* he disclosed that "he (Prince of Wales) talked of the National Congress rapidly becoming a great power."⁸⁰

As a matter of fact, the growing popularity of the Indian National Congress as a result of its penetration in the masses during the days of anti-partition agitation, led to the creation of a great apprehension in the ruling circles of the British Government. In reply Viceroy Lord Minto wrote to Morley on 28 May 1906:

As to the Congress...we must recognise them and be friends with the best of them, yet I am afraid there is much that is absolutely disloyal in the movement and that there is a danger for the future....I have been thinking a good deal lately of a possible counterpoise to Congress aims....A Privy Council not only of native Rulers, but a few other big men to meet, say, once a year for a week or a fortnight at Delhi for instance. Subjects for discussions and procedure would have to be very carefully thought out, but we should get different ideas from men already possessing great interest in the good Government of India.⁸¹

On 6 June 1906, Morley wrote to the Viceroy, "Lawrence, Chisolm, Sydney Lord, all sing the same song....Be sure

Although some of these official documents are already public property, yet their repetition is highly essential to expose British Imperialism.

80. Morley, *Recollections* (London, Macmillan & Co., 1918), Vol. II, p. 171.
81. Lady Mary Minto, *India: Minto and Morley* (London, Macmillan & Co., 1934), pp. 28-9.

that before long Mohammedans will throw in their lot with the Congressmen against you....” And the Viceroy wrote on 27 June, “I feel as you say that there is no fundamental difference between us...”⁸²

In due course of time Lord Minto took elaborate steps to keep the Muslims away from the Congress. A secret message to Nawab Mushin-ul-Mulk, who had succeeded Sir Syed as Secretary of the Board of Trustees of the Aligarh College, was sent through its Principal, Mr. Archibold, that he should take a delegation of leading Muslims to the Viceroy. The later political developments like the arrangement of Simla Deputation to meet the Viceroy, which was called by Maulana Mohamed Ali a “Command Performance”, the presentation of the petition by Sir Aga Khan on 1 October 1906, the assurance of separate electorate by Lord Minto to the Muslim delegates present on the occasion and finally the formation of the All-India Muslim League are now a known story.⁸³ They do not need further revelation now.

The success of the British diplomacy in alienating the powerful leading section of a second most powerful religious community in India from the national movement appeared to render another irreparable setback to nationalism after the defection of Sir Syed and his associates. Not only the political equilibrium between the national forces and alien rulers switched in favour of the latter and thus obstructed the advance of national progress but by winning the political loyalty of the powerful Muslim section the British regime attempted to set it against the Hindus—both national and sectarian. The consistent pursuance of this political approach rendered possible further in aggravating communal animosities between the two major communities culminating off and on in communal riots. It further widened the already existing socio-religious distinction. Besides, thinking in a superficial manner that they had again acquired their ruling position existing in the pre-1857 phase the loyalist upper class Muslims arrayed themselves against the nationalist forces to weaken the cause

82. Ibid, pp. 30-31.

83. For further study see G. Allana, n. 9, pp. 7-12. Also see Syed Rais Ahmad Jafri, ed. by, *Rare Documents* (Lahore, 1967), Part I, pp. 245-58.

of national independence. There developed the contest for political and economic privileges. On the achievement of British diplomacy Lady Minto wrote in her diary:

I have received the following letter from an official :

I must send Your Excellency a line to say that a very big thing has happened today. A work of statesmanship that will affect India and Indian history for many a long year. It is nothing less than the pulling back of 62 millions of people from joining the ranks of the seditious opposition.⁸⁴

Mr. Morley, after receiving an account of the proceedings at Simla, conveyed his feelings to Viceroy Lord Minto, for arranging the meeting very successfully and with diplomatic skill dittoing the imperial policies. He wrote on 26 October 1906 :

All that you tell me of your Mohammedans is full of interest, and I regret that I could not have moved about unseen at your garden party. The whole thing has been as good as it could be, and it stamps your position and personal authority decisively. Among other good effects of your deliverance is this, that it has completely deranged the plan and tactics of the critical faction here, that is to say, it has prevented them from any longer representing the Indian Government as the ordinary case of bureaucracy versus the people. I hope that even my stoutest Radical friends will now see that the problem is not quite so simple as this.⁸⁵

All these things had been arranged in such a manner that they were widely reported in the British press. On the very day of the Muslim Deputation's meeting with the Viceroy the *London Times* and other newspapers and periodicals published long articles eulogizing the intellectual and religious attainments of the Muslims. It was also stated that they were not very much interested in the introduction of democratic insti-

84. Lady Minto, n. 81, p. 47.

85. *Ibid*, p. 48.

tutions on Western model and that there existed no nation in India and so on. Commenting on this attitude of the British press M. Tufail Ahmad wrote :

It appears from these writings how the Press in England contemplated Indians being one nation with a feeling of shock and jealousy and how delighted they were to watch it broken into fragments and how proud they seemed in setting the Indians at loggerheads with one another on communal basis and of generating perpetual hostility between them.⁸⁶

Politics when it attempted to generalize the attitude of simple folk always looked unreal. Their home town, its environments and its people were among the few traditions that these people valued and understood; it commanded their immediate affection and respect. In fact, it was the only social concept which produced the intimacy of feeling in their hearts and minds. One often listened or read about communal passions that flamed extreme. People invariably talked about it as though it were both a social and individual characteristic. But these Hindus and Muslims, the politicians theorized about, lived in small communities. Generations of native genius and simple friendship sustained by common interests has gone to make their community socio-emotionally self-sufficient. They had probably never heard of the commandment about the duty of love they owed their neighbour; it came to them obviously. Religion, apart from its routine institutions, was to them an abstraction. Anything that was not felt manifestly in the immediate layer of consciousness was not real. It was as though they had to feel an idea with their flesh before they could take it in. But the politician was impatient and he distorted truth in the process of modifying it. "Islam is in danger", he warned. "Your mosque, your *namaz*, in fact your children and your property are all in danger of being destroyed." His logic was vague and obscurantist. One did not know how one followed from the other. And in the end he had his way. The social upheaval he worked for, had been achieved, but, the people who paid a dear price, occasionally realize (they only had the glimmerings of a doubt) that the danger, had never been there. It was only brought about.

86. Tufail Ahmad, n. 3, p. 363.

Since its very inception the All-India Muslim League⁸⁷ came to be predominated by a small group of Muslim landlords, bourgeoisie and professional classes. It diverted the political awakening of the Muslim masses into the communal channels. In order to emerge successful in the competitions for key positions with rivals as well as to prevent the growth of a strong united mass movement of the poor Muslim strata against their own vested positions this group gave the newly growing national awakening of the muslim mass a deformed communal form. Instead of exhorting and persuading the politically conscious muslim mass to unite in a common national movement against the perpetuation of the alien rule it dittoed the alien policy of divide and rule, at least upto 1912 when the organisation itself came to be controlled by the nationalist-Muslim intelligentsia. The All-India Muslim Educational Conference was held at Dacca on 30 December 1906 under the chairmanship of Nawab Sir Salimullah of Dacca. In his introductory speech on this occasion, Nawab Viqar-ul-Mulk said :

The purpose for which we have met today is nothing new. It arose from the day the Indian National Congress was founded, so much so that the late lamented Sir Syed Ahmad Khan, for whose sagacious and far-sighted policy we will always remain indebted, was so moved by the growing strength of the Congress that he valiantly strove to convince the Muslims that their betterment and security lay in abstaining from participation in the Congress. This advice was so sound that, though he is not among us today, yet the Muslims firmly hold to it, and as time passes we realise more and more that the Muslims should make the maximum efforts to protect their political rights.

Displaying his feudalistic approach to material problems he added:

The Muslims are only one-fourth of the population of other communities of India. It is quite obvious that,

87. On the formation of the Muslim League see the account by Muhammed Shafi, General Secretary of the Punjab Provincial Muslim League in 1908 inserted in official file [Home Public—B 13, Progs. August 1908, No. 45, p. 12.]

if at any time the British Government ceases to exist in India, the nation which is four times more numerous will rule the country. Now, gentlemen, everyone should ponder as to what would be our condition at that time. In such a contingency our lives, our property, our honour, our religion, all will be in jeopardy. Today when the might of the British Government affords protection to the people there are numerous instances of the difficulties and troubles we experience at the hands of our neighbours in the various provinces. Woe betide the time when we have to live as subjects of these people who want to take revenge of Aurengzeb from us after hundreds of years. Whatever differences we now have or may have in future with the Congress concern three matters: firstly, those demands of the Congress which imperil the existence of the British Government in India; secondly, those questions which are prejudicial to our legitimate rights; thirdly, their violent tone against the Government which the Muslims do not appreciate.⁸⁸

According to the report of *the Observer* (Lahore) dated 4 December 1907, prepared on the occasion of the inaugural meeting of the Punjab Provincial Muslim League the chairman "cautioned the Muhammedan community against the dangers of being led away by doctrines preached by the political extremists (Congressmen)."⁸⁹

Instead of endeavouring for the establishment of national unity between the major communities of India the reactionary leaders evolved a new theory that the Indian Muslims by themselves were a nation separate from the Hindu nation though the Muslims in India—before and even after the partition of the Indian peninsula—lacked a common territorial basis, a common language and common socio-political life. To strengthen this kind of sectarianism the communalist Muslims always took shelter of the British colonialists. No better proof is required for this than the following resolutions passed by the Muslim League at its Dacca meeting, on

83. G. Allana, n. 9, pp. 21-2.

89. Home Public—B, Progs. August 1908, No. 45, p. 12.

30 December 1906, under the chairmanship of Nawab Viqar-ul-Mulk, "Resolved that this meeting...decides...the furtherance of the following objects:

- (a) To promote among the Musalmans of India the feeling of loyalty to the British Government and remove any misconception that may arise as to the intention of the Government with regard to any of its measures.
- (b)° To promote and advance the political rights and interests of the Musalmans of India, and respectfully to present the needs and aspirations to Government."⁹⁰

The main centre of League's political activities was the Aligarh College. The trustees of the College were playing a very prominent role in infusing in young Muslim intelligentsia a spirit of loyalty to the alien regime. A Memorandum containing proposed presentation to the Viceroy of an address by the trustees of the Muhammadan Anglo-Oriental College at Aligarh sent to the Home Department of U.P. Government, laid down:

It need hardly be stated that the basis of all efforts and of all teaching in the college lies, and always will lie, in a firm and intelligent loyalty to His Majesty the King-Emperor, and the hope of all connected with the institution is that it may train up a body of loyal and useful citizens capable of taking their part with credit in the affairs of their country and active in assisting the Government in promoting the well-being of their community and of India as a whole.⁹¹

Birth of Hindu Mahasabha

The emergence of the communal body of Muslim League invited the birth of the counter communal organization of Hindu Mahasabha very shortly from among the mercantile and feudal classes of Hindus. The rise of these two communal political institutions provided another impediment to

90. G. Allana, n. 9, p. 23.

91. Home Education—A, November 1908, Progs. No. 61, p. 20.

the newly growing socio-political renaissance in India. Though both the bodies swore by the objective of maintaining friendly amity between Hindus and Muslims, yet their activities were poles apart from what they outwardly professed in the columns of their political aims and objects. Their actions were directed towards fostering centrifugal and separatist tendencies in Indian politics. In such a suspicious environment the lip-service to friendship and amity could generate more suspicion which, though it might lie dormant, was ready to break forth into communal riots at its earliest available opportunity of smallest provocation.⁹²

All these communal developments went against the logic of national evolution. The national progress got retarded its smooth channelization in the directions cherished by the nationalist-minded individuals. And the new-socio-political environment which emerged out of these developments, was very unlike that which a nationalist had aspired for or visualized for. It was not an environment of harmony, homogeneity and tranquility but of conflict and violence, bitterness and antagonism,

The main objective of the Hindu Conference continued to be the consolidation of Hindu community as a separate and predominating community over the others, especially the Muslim. Welcoming the delegates to the third All India Hindu Conference meeting at Lucknow on 25 December 1916, Raja Ram Pal Singh explained the scope and aim of the Hindu Sabha movement. He stated:

Self-preservation is the first function and foremost duty of everything that breathes. Nay, further, every particle of even inanimate matter resists all efforts to break it. How much more it is then the paramount duty of the great and important Hindu community to preserve its solidarity and to resist all attempts made against its hard-earned growth and progress.⁹³

92. For further study see Home Public -- A, progs. May 1907, Nos. 155-56 (Confdl), pp. 3-5 and Home Public -- A, June 1907, Nos. 227-28 (Confdl), p. 5.

93. Summary Report of the proceedings of the third All-India Hindu Conference published in *The Indian Review* (Madras, 1917), Vol. XVIII, p. 23.

Acting on communal lines this political body never recognized the fact that the Indian National Congress, in those days mainly predominated by the Hindu intelligentsia, could ever deliver goods to the members of the Hindu community. On the eve of the concluding of the Congress-Muslim League Scheme in 1916 the president at the third All-India Hindu Conference held in December of that very year, V.P. Madhava Rao, wrote to the Congress Secretary on 25 December :

I think we will be failing in our duty to the Indian National Congress if we were not to inform you that if you consult only the Muslim League representatives in your deliberations on the above questions, you will not be doing justice to the great Hindu community. We do feel that our views and sentiments are not and cannot be fully represented by those Hindus alone who happen to be there as members of the All-India Congress Committee.⁹⁴

Whenever such disruptive forces were in motion they stirred deeper suspicions and antagonistic emotions between Hindus and Mussalmans.

Imperialist Manipulations continued unabated

Meanwhile the alien regime also continued to poke her nose in the quarrels of the disruptive forces. Its preponderant interest lay in the perpetuation of its political hegemony and economic predominance over Indians. As soon as it witnessed the slightest loosening of its grip over the continuation of its economic and political interests due to political activities of the national bodies like the Indian National Congress or the clandestine revolutionary societies, it had started giving serious thought in propounding rival communal-cum-political organisations composed solely of loyalist elements.⁹⁵

The strong bias of the alien rulers in favour of the Muslim community obviously tended to exaggerate the existing differences and highlighting the social discrimination practised by

94. Ibid.

95. For further study see W.C. Smith, *Modern Islam in India* (London, Victor Gollancez Ltd., 1946), p. 169.

the Hindus against the Muslims and the untouchables. Sir Winston Churchill, for example, always appeared to be interesting in fostering communal antagonism between these two major religious groups. In his own way he drew the demarcation lines to divide the indigenous people in hostile camps, each deeply immersed in its own sectarian, sectional and communal differences. Magnifying the existing communal differences between Hindus and Muslims he stated:

‘There are scores of nations and races in India and hundreds of religions and sects.... Side by side with this Brahmin theocracy and the immense Hindu population—angelic and untouchable castes alike—there dwell in India seventy millions of Moslems, a race of far greater physical vigour and fierceness, armed with a religion which lends itself only too readily to war and conquest. While the Hindu elaborates his argument, the Moslem sharpens his sword. Between these two races and creeds... there is no inter-marriage. The gulf is impassable.... If you took the antagonisms of France and Germany, the antagonisms of Catholics and Protestants, and compounded them and multiplied them ten-fold, you would not equal the division which separates these two races intermingled by scores of millions in the cities and plains of India. But over both of them the impartial rule of Britain has hitherto lifted its appearing sceptre.’⁹⁶

Likewise, Lord Curzon considered the Indian races as much different from each other as the Esquimaux was from the Spaniard or the Irishman from the Turk, with creeds that ranged between the extreme points of the “basest animalism” on the one side, and the “most exalted metaphysics” on the other; with standards of existence that covered the entire space between barbarism and civilization. He magnified the religious differences of Indian people to the point where all the sectarian animosities of the Western people almost tended to “sink into the shade”. In his view there prevailed a “chaos of languages” and stages of mental organisation

96. Winston S. Churchill, *Speeches on India* (London, Thornton Butterworth Ltd., 1931, second ed.), pp. 77 & 126-27.

that extended from the "transcendentalist to the savage".⁹⁷ However, he forgot easily the role of his predecessors in making Indians uncomfortable.

Separate Electorates

The demand of the separate electorate was for the first time raised by the Muslim deputation consisted of jagirdars, taluqdars, zamindars, bourgeois traders and petty-bourgeois lawyers and intellectuals, which met the Viceroy Minto at Simla on 1 October 1906. Forgetting the disasters suffered by the leaders of their community in particular, and Indians in general at the hands of the colonialists in 1857 the members of the deputation hypocritically eulogized the British rulers for conferring "incalculable benefits" on Indians. They also felt grateful for the peace, security, personal freedom and liberty of worship that they were enjoying under British tutelage. Raising their own class claims in the name of their community they demanded the so-called fair share in representation of their interests in the enlarged councils under the new reform scheme to be introduced in the near future. They then believed that Muslims were a state within a state and a society within a society. Their ideas of representation ran counter to the concept of a democratic society itself. They believed in a parallel co-existence with the majority with complete autonomy as a community. This explained their resistance to secularism. Basing their plea on pure communalism and a strange obsession of increasing their number in order to be effective in power politics they even tried to show the proportion of Muslims to the Hindu majority much larger by deducting the so-called "uncivilised portions" of the [Hindu] community enumerated under the heads of animist and other minor religions, as well as those classes which were ordinarily classified as Hindus but in their view were not Hindus at all. They also added:

We venture, indeed, with your Excellency's permission to go a step further, and urge that the position accorded to the Mohamedan community in any kind of representation direct or indirect, and in all other ways affecting their status and influence should be commensurate, not merely with their numerical strength, but

97. C.S. Raghunatha Rao, ed., *Notable Speeches of Lord Curzon* (Madras, The Arya Press, 1905), p. 340.

also with their political importance and the value of the contribution which they make to the defence of the empire, and we also hope that your Excellency will in this connection be pleased to give due consideration to the position which they occupied in India little more than hundred years ago and of which the traditions have naturally not faded from their minds. The Mohamedans of India have always placed implicit reliance on the sense of justice and love of fair dealing that have characterised their rulers,⁹⁸ and have in consequence abstained from pressing their claims by methods that might prove at all embarrassing.⁹⁹

Demanding a separate representation the deputationists stated that it could not be denied that they were a distinct community with additional interests of their own which were not shared by other communities, and these had hitherto suffered from the fact that they had not been adequately represented. Even in the provinces in which the Mohamedans constituted a distinct majority of the population, they had too often been treated as though they were inappreciably small political factors that might without fairness be neglected. This had been the case to some extent, in the Punjab but in a more marked degree in Sind and in Eastern Bengal. The deputation also remarked, "Before formulating our view with regard to the election of representatives we beg to observe that the political importance of a community to a considerable extent gains strength or suffers detriment according to the position that the members of that community occupy in the service of the State, If, as is unfortunately the case with the Mohamedans, they are not adequately represented in this manner, they lose in the prestige and influence which are justly their due."¹⁰⁰

98. The renowned poet Ghalib has depicted the terrible plight of Indian Muslims after the ruthless suppression of 1857 national upsurge as follows: "What is called the square is the slaughter house; the house is like prison. Every dust particle of the city of Delhi thirsts for the blood of every Mussalman." [*The Pakistan Times*, 11 July 1967, mag. section, p. 1.]

99. G. Allana, n. 9, p.7.

100. Ibid, p. 9.

The virtual encouragement¹⁰¹ and acceptance by Lord Minto and introduction by Lord Morley of the principle of separate electorate in the Council Reform Scheme of 1909 became the cause and effect of retarding the cause of national integration in India. The principle of representation on religious basis caused eventually bitter disappointment in the secular circles which believed that the implementation of this doctrine would give impetus to the sectarian elements. And it was considered entirely detrimental to the interests of the nation that any sectarian element in any representative assembly should be introduced. Thus the secularists alleged that the separate compartment idea pervaded the scheme. However, these objections of the secularists did imply in no case the curtailment of the due rights of the Muslim community. Their approach towards this controversial issue has been well summarized by Philip Woodruff, a retired civil servant sympathetic to Indian cause, who put:

To give them (Muslims) a separate constituency is to perpetuate the differences between us. No Muslim will be elected unless he dozes communal bitterness. Give them indeed the right to so many Muslim seats, but the candidates for those seats be elected by a general constituency. Then the Muslims to be elected will be the one who is ready to sink communal differences and meet the Hindus. Then we shall have a chance of becoming one people.¹⁰²

However, the reluctance of the alien regime to retreat from its proclaimed stand led the nationalists to believe that the "introduction of separate constituencies was a deep-laid plot aimed at dividing the communities and providing an excuse for extending British rule for ever." In their view it was "Machiavellian" politics.¹⁰³

101. It was the observation of Ramsay Macdonald that it was the bureaucracy that was responsible for the introduction of separate electorate. He wrote: "The Mohamedan leaders were inspired by certain Anglo-Indian officials, and these officials have pulled wires at Simla and in London and of malice aforethought sowed discord between the Hindu and Mohammedan communities by showing the Muslims special favour." [R. Macdonald, *The Awakening of India*, p. 176.]

102. Philip Woodruff, *The Men who Ruled India*, (London, Jonathan Cape, 1955, Third edition), p. 209.

103. *Ibid.*

The nationalists further alleged that the promulgation of the separate electorate would not only perpetuate communal animosities but was a defiance of the pledges and proclamations given by the English Sovereign in the past, stating not to carry out any racial or communal distinctions between "Her Majesty's subjects". That it was a departure from the traditional policy emphasising on the equal treatment of all classes, and that it attached importance to religious groups than to the secular ones. It emphasised on a morality based on religion rather than a secular approach to ethics. A secular ethics was possible and had been consistently developed in the light of modern knowledge and man's innate rationality. Speaking in the annual session of the Indian National Congress held in 1910 a delegate Satish Chandra Banerji stated:

We believe that neither communal representation nor separate electorates can do any of us any good. As has been repeatedly said on this platform and elsewhere, we are Indians first and Hindus or Mahomedans or anything else that you please, only afterwards As the offspring of the same mother our interests are identical, and "united we stand, divided we fall." Anything that is calculated to accentuate our differences and to divide us from one another can but bring about a disruption of the national unity which is our ideal — the goal after which this Congress has been striving for a quarter of a century.¹⁰⁴

Speaking in the next session of the Indian National Congress a prominent nationalist Pandit Rambhaji Dutt Chaudhuri stated:

A greater wrong has been done to India by the introduction of this separate electorate, than the great wrong that was done by Lord Curzon himself. Pardon me, gentlemen, if I say so, your partition [partition of Bengal] was only a partition of hearths, but our partition is a partition of hearts.... The only chance of their [Hindus and Muslims] unification... has been practically taken away by this separate electorate.¹⁰⁵

104. *Report of the Annual Session of the Indian National Congress held in 1910*, p. 89.

105. *Ibid*, 1911, pp. 84-5.

Speaking in the same session Pandit Gorakhnath Misra pointed out that acceptance of the communal electorate would also provoke the various sections within a particular religion to demand separate representation for themselves. He remarked:

How far you should carry this principle of communal representation. If a Hindu has to distinguish a Mahomedan and a Mahomedan a Hindu, why should there be any trust or confidence between Hindus or Christians or any other community. If separate communal representation is to be granted to the Mahomedans, why should it not be granted to the Christians or even the Buddhists? Then among the Mahomedans, why not the *Shias* opposed to the *Sunnis*. Then among the Hindus, why not the Jains, why not to the Arya Samajists?¹⁰⁶

At every session of the Congress resolutions were passed against the introduction of the new electorate system and despatched to the British Government both in India and England. In the resolution passed at the 1910 session of the Congress was stated that while recognising the necessity of providing for a fair and adequate representation in the Legislative Councils for the Muhammedan and other communities where they were in a minority, the Congress disapproved the regulations promulgated last year to carry out this object by means of separate electorates, and in particular it urged upon the Government the justice and expediency of modifying the regulations framed under the Indian Councils Act of 1909, before another election.¹⁰⁷

Even before the announcement of the Minto-Morley Reform Scheme the assurance by Lord Minto to the Muslim deputation at Simla of separate representations at local self-governing bodies was strongly opposed by the nationalist forces. They exhorted the people to be aware of the perpetuation of differences between the two major communities by the implementation of such a scheme. "We are all in this country governed", stated Pt. Gorakh Nath Misra in the 1911 session

106. Ibid, p. 90.

107. *The Report 1910*, p. 5.

of the Indian National Congress, "by the same laws and the same institutions, and there is no such thing as a Hindu institution or a Muhammedan institution or interest."¹⁰⁸ Opposing this communal approach the nationalist elements pointed out that the best way to unite the two communities was not to divide them. M.A. Jinnah, a staunch nationalist during those days, moved the following resolution in the 1910 session of the National Congress:

This Congress strongly deprecates the extention or application of the principle of separate communal electorate to municipalities, district boards or other local bodies.¹⁰⁹

To the nationalist intelligentsia the introduction of the separate electorate appeared an apple of discord which the alien regime and its Indian allies sought to introduce. They held that the implementation of such a policy would lead to the division of the country into a number of exclusive and isolated sections, always prone to attach undue importance to their own self-interest, without any consideration to what was best for the country and without the consciousness that all of them belonged to a single nation. They alleged that such a movement would be particularly disastrous in India where group consciousness predominated so much over national consciousness. That the great process of welding the various races and people of India into a single community would be frustrated where it ought to work for union. Hence the advocacy in favour of the separate electorates appeared to them to be partisan in spirit. Speaking in the annual session of the Indian National Congress held in 1911 a delegate, Munshi Narayan Prasad, stated:

I do not know how far this claim of separate electorate would go. The local bodies have to deal with sanitation, lighting and roads. I do not know whether the Mohammadans would like and have separate roads, or separate lamps, or even a separate atmosphere to breath in.¹¹⁰

108. *The Report 1911*, p. 89.

109. *The Report 1910*, p. 46.

110. *The Report 1911*, p. 90.

On the other hand, the League's stand made it clear that the Muslims as a body were determined to assert themselves as a separate political entity. As decided at its Aligarh meeting in March 1908, the League submitted its views on the Government Despatch on the Reforms Scheme and demanded for Muslims the right to elect their own representatives to the Councils and allocation of seats in excess of their population strength in the provinces where they constituted a minority in view of their historical and political importance.¹¹¹

It does not, however, imply that the Muslims unanimously demanded separate electorate. Persons like Syed Ali Imam, a prominent member of the Muslim League, who had presided at its second session held at Amritsar in December, 1908, opposed its implementation. After his meeting Gokhale, Ali Imam made the following statement: "If the Muslims wholly keep away from joint electorate they would be completely alienated from the Hindus. They should, therefore, participate in joint electorate also and some Muslim representatives should come through joint electorate. Any fluctuation in their number should be tolerated." He tried to get his proposal endorsed by the All-India Muslim League before the Government of India sent its despatch to London.

This progressive approach of some of the Muslims was countered by Nawab Viqar-ul Mulk on whom had fallen the mantle of Syed Ahmad Khan and Nawab Mohsin-ul Mulk. In the course of an article he observed that there were two opinions among the Mussalmans. The opinion of the bulk of the community was opposed to participation in joint electorate. A small group including Syed Ali Imam were in favour of joint electorate. But Viqar-ul-mulk held that Muslims' participation in joint electorate would lead to quarrels and squabbles between the Hindus and the Muslims and impairment of their old relations. He, therefore, could not advice the Muslims to take part in joint electorate. Vague and suspicious of Hindu intentions as he was, he believed that the majority community would defeat them at the time of passing a legislation and they would "face the disgrace of having put before them the beggars' bowl". If at all they succeeded, it would be due to

111. *The Pakistan Times*, (Lahore), 8 October 1967, Magazine Section, p. 1.

the charity of majority. It would be bestowed for their being subservient. He contemptuously added:

Even now we see that the National Congress raises some Muslims to its presidency. Are these Muslim gentlemen then of any use to the Muslims? They cannot be even as useful as a peon to us. Thus, if anyone gets elected as a member after sacrificing his nation and national interests he may have the joy of such membership; the nation will have nothing to do with him.¹¹²

In a telegram despatched by the Secretary, All India Muslim League, Aligarh, dated the 13th September, 1909, on the subject of the representation of Muslims on the enlarged councils, addressed to the Viceroy, the latter was requested to forward the following resolutions to the Secretary of State:

- (i) That the All-India Muslim League reaffirms its conviction that a full, adequate and effective representation of the Indian Muslims cannot be secured without providing for them by special and separate electorates composed entirely of Muhammadan electors a number of seats, as pledged by the Secretary of State for India and His Excellency the Viceroy, fixed not only on the basis of numerical proportion but also in accordance of their political importance, and that this principle should be extended to the reformed Councils, the Municipal and District Boards...
- (ii) that the All-India Muslim League reaffirms the following memorable pronouncement of its President His Highness the Aga Khan made at the first annual meeting of its London Branch on 24th June last: "Speaking with a full sense of responsibility as President of the All-India Muslim League and after fully weighing my words I unhesitatingly say that if in the final shaping of the plans of Government the pledges made to us are

not carried out to the full in the spirit as well as in the letter the reforms of which Lord Morley spoke so hopefully the other day, are doomed to failure.”¹¹³

The situation was further complicated by a statement delivered in the House of Commons in 1909 by Lord Morley, on the demand for separate electorates. Unlike his predecessors who kept the Muslims aloof from politics, he was now doing all he could to pitch them against the nationalist forces in the political arena. Many of the self-justificatory arguments advanced by him as a protector of an imperialist legacy were bound to be exaggerated and overlaid with considerable non-clarity of intentions and purposes. They implied that British rule would continue, ought to continue and must continue. They also implied that if the dateless perpetuation of arbitrary sway of one race over another on any terms was the basic necessity, any and every means used for its preservation was legitimate. What is more, most of his arguments had been so patently doctored, if not wholly prefabricated, that normally no serious scholar would be persuaded to accept them as adequate basis for accurate assessment. His sweeping remarks on the communal situation might have drawn loud applause from the imperialists' lobby in the House of Commons, yet they lacked the sagacity of an honest liberal statesman which he very much claimed to be. His liberalism was one of those elastic terms which could cover a multitude of virtues and sins. It had become synonymous with denigration of democratic values. His reasoning in favour of the prevailing “iniquities” in India could equally well be used to justify every vileness with which the imperialists, ancient or modern, had attempted to put down opposition to their sovereign will. He reminded his audience that the difference between Mohamadanism and Hinduism was not a mere difference of articles of religions and dogmas. In his view it was a difference of life, in tradition, history, all the social things as well as articles of belief that constituted a community. In order to veto the reforms aimed at the democratization of the functioning of the political institutions in India he posed hypothetical dangers. It is self-evident that there were certain inhibitions

113. Home, Public—A, Progs. October 1909, Nos. 49-50, p. 5.

of imperial interest which led him to counteract the revolutionary insurgency of nationalism in India. Magnifying the Muslim apprehensions in the course of his speech he parted company from nationalism when he added that the Muslims protested against the joint electorate because they feared the Hindus would elect a pro-Hindu, just as he supposed, in a mixed college of nearabout three-fourth Catholics and one-fourth Protestants voting together, the Protestants might suspect that the Catholics would choose a Romanizing Protestant and as little of a Protestant as they could find. Advancing still another hypothesis he added:

In Ireland there is an expression, a shoneen Catholic that is to say a Catholic, who though a Catholic, is too friendly with English Conservatism and other influences which the Nationalists dislike. And it might be said if there were seventy-five Protestants against twenty-five Catholics, that the Protestants when giving a vote in the way of Catholic representative, would return shoneens.¹¹⁴

The reversive impact created by the separate electorates to the growth of nationalism is difficult to exaggerate for as Mahatma Gandhi once stated: "the curse of communalism became intensified by the introduction of separate electorates. The cry for partition is the logical outcome."¹¹⁵ Thus one step followed another—from separate political course to separate electorate, separate nationhood and finally separate statehood. Thus the already existing rivalry between Hindus and Muslims which had not widened very much so far, was intensified by "the struggle for political power and for the opportunities which political power confers..."¹¹⁶ The nationalist movement became unable to draw sustenance equally from both the communities.

Once the Muslim intelligentsia of feudal *cum* bourgeois origin discovered communalism sustaining through the mechanism of separate electorate, to be a powerful instrument to

114. G. Allana, n. 9, p. 24.

115. M.R. Gandhi, *To the Protagonists of Pakistan* (Allahabad, Law Journal Press, 1947), p. 35.

116. *The Indian Statutory Commission Report*, Vol. I (London, H.M. Stationery Office, 1930), p. 30.

achieve political power they stick to the doctrine strictly and firmly. The enfranchised Muslims and members of other communal sections as well were made to "vote communally, think communally, listen only to communal election speeches, judge the delegates communally, look for constitutional and other reforms only in terms of more relative communal power and express their grievances communally."¹¹⁷

Actually speaking, the deterrent factor to a political combination of two major communities was the absence of the spirit of compromise where their individual or collective objects came into clash. There was a disinclination on the part of the feudal and bourgeois elements of both the communities to meet half way in their disagreements and dissensions. Both of them appeared lacking in the spirit of open-heartedness, an inclination to offer more than to take. The real patriotism that transcends the communal and sectarian lines and gives due cognizance to the welfare, progress, advancement of every creed or community, was conspicuous by its absence. The patriot was there but he was a "communal patriot", a typical product of a complex environment. He was a concrete illustration of the significant forces of creed and history that bifurcated the Indian religious communities into rival sections. The contemporary complex situation in India justified his existence in the following manner, as observed by Maulana Mohamed Ali in his weekly *Comrade* in February 1912:

The "nationalist" of the Congress school would swear by "nationality" and patriotism and vehemently deny that any communal monster could exist in his ranks, and point, with a mild, deprecating gesture, to "Muslim Leaguers" and their cries for "separate electorates". The Muslims would hold forth on the woes of "minorities", the imperative duty of self-preservation and the aggressive spirit and character of Hindu "nationalism". These self-righteous attitudes prove... that the "patriotism" in vogue in this country is exclusively Hindu or Muslim.¹¹⁸

117. F.K. Durrani, *The Meaning of Pakistan* (Lahore, Sh. Mohd. Ashraf, 1944), p. 97.

118. Afzal Iqbal, ed., *Select Writings and Speeches of Maulana Mohammed Ali* (Lahore, Shaikh Mohammed Ashraf, 1944), p. 65.

Continuing further the author alleged that the discussions on this problem had rarely been inspired by intellectual honesty and courage. Most of the literature on patriotism was "fumbling, shallow and jejune."¹¹⁹ Not only it lacked sincerity and breadth of outlook and deep insight, but it also betrayed "inordinate fondness for crude and subterfuges and cheap claptrap with a view to secure some paltry advantage in the struggle for race ascendancy."¹²⁰ And the "communal patriot" only represented in his inadequacy narrowness and fanaticism, the temper and attitude of his respective people.¹²¹

Competition for jobs

Still another element of national disruption was the claims for jobs and privileges made by the newly growing intelligentsia in Hindus and Muslims respectively. Each one of them wanted the lion's share of Government appointments, honorary or paid. When one of the two on either side failed in the objective, he raised the bogey of communalism.¹²² Attempts were thus made to fight over the economic issues in the garb of religion. Strangely enough, this truth had not been accepted by the adherents of two-nation theory even twenty years after the creation of Pakistan. In a seminar held on M.A. Jinnah on 18 September 1967 at the BNR Auditorium at Lahore under the auspices of the newly-formed Pakistan Cultural Council some of the speakers vehemently denounced the new trend of thought emerging in Pakistani youth that the basis of the Pakistan Movement was not religion but political and economic factors which had forced Jinnah to exploit Islam to make his movement popular among the Muslims of the sub-continent. In support of their contention they misquoted excerpts from the statements and speeches of Jinnah to prove that he had never thought of divorcing the Pakistan Movement from its religious basis as he was an ardent follower of the two-nation theory.¹²³

119. *Ibid.*

120. *Ibid.*, p. 66.

121. *Ibid.*

122. For further study see the memorandum submitted by the Muslim Deputation led by Aga Khan to the Viceroy at Simla on 1 October 1906; [G. Allana, n. 9, pp. 6-7. Also see K.P. Karunakaran, n. 14, pp. 221-22.]

123. *The Pakistan Times*, (Lahore), 19 September 1967, p. 4, cols. 4-5.

The quarrel over the jobs helped the growth of innumerable temptations that a wary and manipulating policy of the alien regime cleverly designed and untiringly spread and then complacently witnessed the downfall of the victims. The attitude of communal bourgeois and petty-bourgeois classes towards each other was a striking illustration of the lowliness into which political degradation of a subject people could reach, and how skillfully employed tenets of diplomatic manouvering could succeed in leading into wrong channels the vision of these classes. Criticizing this deficiency of Muslim class, a prominent Muslim nationalist, Syed Hasan Imam, observed:

To the Indian Mahomedans the empty bauble of so-called privilege is held forth as a bait against his loyalty to his country and his kin and he has fallen a victim to the blandishments of official smiles. He believes that the elevated brows of deep disdain of the ruler are meant to gloom the non-Muslim alone and his patronizations he misconstrues into a request for co-operation. Little does he realise that the Imperial Britisher sits in his throne of glory and grandeur without a partner and from all on whom he sheds his benignity he exacts service for their wages of preferments and he neither invites nor will accept a co-operation that may hurt his pride or harm his interest. The Indian Mahomedan in the present mood of the ruling race misinterprets the tolerance that is allowed him into a social intercourse or confidential relation that at once platters his vanity and fans his hopes and in his self-interest violates the bonds of kinship.¹²⁴

This communal jealousy between the two advanced sections was the result of their unbalanced position numerically. Due to the suppression of the Muslim upper classes and the sections from which the middle class intelligentsia would have emerged in the post-1857 period their future development was affected. They were consciously kept out of the administrative, medical, legal and other similar professions. On the other hand, their corresponding classes in Hindus, were if not

124. Syed Hasan Imam, "Mahomedan Attitude", *The Indian Review* (Madras, 1909), Vol. X, p. 891.

actually encouraged, at least were provided an environment where they could develop themselves and thereby occupy a predominant position in the nation's public professions. Moreover, the economic politics pursued by the alien regime within the framework of its imperialist system, resulted in benefitting a section of the people of whom a great proportion were Hindus than the Muslims. However, there came a time when the advanced classes among Hindus, led by the intelligentsia, began to raise the claim for political rights. With the emergence of this clash of interests between Hindu advanced classes and the alien regime the latter changed its attitude and began to favour the Muslims by providing them better opportunities of life.¹²⁵ However speedy its work might have been, but this could not establish a balanced position between the two sectors of the two communities. The share of the Muslims in the growth of its middle class intelligentsia was proportionally weak. Rather than saying that the Muslim middle class was economically more backward and more pro-British, than the Hindu middle class, it would be more accurate to say that the economically backward, pro-British middle class was more Muslim than was the older, stronger, now fault-finding middle class. However it is put, herein lay the economic basis for the growth of communalism.¹²⁶

In another way the economic factor was also responsible for developing communal tendencies between the two major communities of India. Despite the fact that the Muslims were the ruling race before the advent of British rule in India, their vast majority most of whom were converts from the lower and depressed classes of Hindus, remained economically backward. Though by converting them from Hinduism the Islam could give them an ideological base but it did not introduce any radical change in their economic position. Therefore, the vast majority of the Muslims continued to belong to the classes of peasantry and proletariat, while a substantial number of their landlords and money-lenders were Hindus. This also embittered the relations of two communities.

125. For further study of this aspect see Syed Rais Ahmad Jafri, n. 3., pp. 115, 129, 138, 199, 225 & 335.

126. W.C. Smith, n. 95, pp. 162-64.

Partition of Bengal Annulled

Meanwhile a number of factors tended to weaken the loyalty and goodwill of the Muslim community in the genuinity of the colonialists. Even the most conservative Muslims were utterly disappointed and bitterly irritated by the nullification of the Partition of Bengal on 12 December 1911. "It (British Government) dropped the Mussalmans", commented Maulana Mohammad Ali in 1923, "like a hot potato. Never was a more ignoble betrayal perpetuated in the whole history of Indian politics."¹²⁶ The annulment of partition was very disillusionary for the Nawab Salimullah Khan who had been won over previously by Lord Curzon in favour of the partition after advancing a loan of Rs. 100,000 at a low rate of interest. He gave vent to his feelings by remarking: "Our ill-wishers at once preceived that the partition would necessarily bring to the fore the long-neglected claims of the Muslims of East Bengal, although we never got more than what was justly our due."¹²⁷ After presiding over the annual session of the Muslim League at Calcutta in March 1912, the Nawab resigned his post and withdrew from active party politics and died shortly afterwards. In other parts of India too the feelings of the Muslims were no less bitter. Nawab Viqarul Mulk, one of the founders of the Muslim League, remarked: "Government's policy is like an artillery which passed over the bodies of the Muslims, irrespective of whether any life was left in them and whether they would feel any agony. To say nothing of Morocco or Tripoli or Iran Islam itself is being annihilated here."¹²⁸

After the annulment of partition there was a feeling growing among Muslims that they did not stand to gain anything by keeping away from the Hindus and they should join the Indian National Congress.

Hindu-Muslim Entente

By the beginning of 1912 there occurred a new change in the relationship existing between Hindus and Muslims. A new

126. *Congress Presidential Addresses 1911 to 1934* (Madras, G.A. Natesan & Co., second series), p. 627.

127. Cited by Jami-ul-Din Ahmad, "Partition of Bengal" *Pakistan Times* (Lahore), 20 August 1967, magazine section, p. 2, col. 7.

128. *Ibid.*

generation of young Muslims was growing up under a new environment which was very much different from that of the days of Sir Syed Ahmad Khan. To these young people the lessons of Sir Syed emphasizing loyalty to the alien regime appeared to be totally obsolete. They were not quite prepared, as the old feudal class had been, to repeat the lessons taught by colonialists and to follow the way shown by them. The knowledge that they had acquired from the modern system of Western education was very different from the preachings of Sir Syed. They constituted a liberal elite which would identify itself and collaborate with other modern liberals against both Muslim and Hindu communalism that was clinging to obscurantist medievalism. The new elite was much more nearer to that which had been acquired by the leading nationalist-minded intelligentsia amongst Hindus. Like the latter it was feeling ashamed of its position as a subject people to preserve its self-respect, and attempting to keep alive the memory of the time when its ancestors were ruling India. Imbued with the new knowledge the young Muslim intelligentsia was ready to share with their counterparts among Hindus the new ideology of Indian Nationalism. Moreover, the growth of powerful nationalist movements in Turkey and Persia under the leadership of the young Turks and Reza Shah Pehalvi respectively were filling the minds of the young Muslims in India with nationalist fervour. Commenting on the growth of this liberal class of Muslims Muszhar-ul-Haque stated:

This party has not only arisen but has already conquered the entire body of the followers of Islam.... The anti-Congress Mussalman is fast becoming an extinct species and will have soon to be searched for in some archaeological museum.... For a time no doubt they were dazzled by the ideas of special interest and of special favours, but time brought its own revenge and they found out what they were so much enamoured of mere shadowy phantoms. What they could not once conceive they are perceiving now.¹²⁹

129. Excerpt from the text of speech published in *The Indian Review* (Madras, 1913), Vol. XIV, p. 821.

The young Muslim intelligentsia also came to have their sway on the organization of the Muslim League. Guided by their influence the Muslim League, for the first time since its inception, adopted in 1913 the resolution of self-government though within the British Empire, as its ultimate goal. The new leaders of the League began to believe that the time had come when they should realise that the real honour was the one which the people of the country conferred and not the one which the Government bestowed. This new development was undoubtedly a great landmark in the history of Indian nationalism. For the first time the attainment of *swaraj*, however limited, became a demand of the United India. It further paved the way of lessening communal antagonism and emergence of Hindu-Muslim unity on all India level. The nationalist character of the Muslim League became evident. For the first time the influence of the feudal elements receded to background within the fold of the All-India Muslim League, which was brought into line with the national ideal of the Indian National Congress. Mohammed Ali Jinnah, an ardent Congressman in those days, was persuaded to join the League. Necessary changes were introduced in the constitution of the League in order to promote national unity by fostering public spirit among the people and by closely co-operating with the other communities residing in India.

The leaders of the Indian National Congress welcomed this progressive step of the members of the All-India Muslim League by passing a resolution in the Congress annual session held in 1913. They expressed their complete accord with the League's emphatic belief that the political future of India depended on the harmonious working and co-operation of various communities. And this had also been the cherished ideal of their party. The resolution also stated:

This Congress most heartily welcomes the hope expressed by the League that the leaders of the different communities will make every endeavour to find a *modus operandi* for joint and concerted action on all questions of national good and earnestly appeals to all the sections of the people to help the object we all have at heart.¹³⁰

130. *Report of the 28th Session of the Indian National Congress held at Karachi on 26-8 December 1913* (Karachi, 1914), p. 10.

Speaking on the resolution a leading congressman, Bhu-
pendra Nath stated in the same session that it was not an
easy thing for the members of the Muslim League to have
come publicly forward from their platform and to have adop-
ted as their ideal that which the Congressmen adopted from
the very first. They were glad that these people had at last re-
alized and publicly declared that India could progress if they
all, Hindus and Muslims, concentrated their attention on
one united ideal. He also stated that they had also realiz-
ed that the India of today was not the India of the Hindus,
nor the India of the Muslims, nor of the Anglo-Indians, much
less the India of the Europeans but an India in which all In-
dian communities, nay even Europeans, could have a share.
Continuing further he pointed out that days of dissension had
passed and the time for unity had come. He also added:

Let us set about writing a new horoscope for India
on the scroll of time and the India of the future will
be a stronger, nobler, greater, higher and aye a brigh-
ter India than was realised by Asoka in the plenti-
tude of his power, a better India than was revealed
to Akbar in the wildest of his visions.¹³¹

Supporting the resolution a delegate quoted the following
stanza of Whitman:

Comrade, I give you my hand,
I give you my love more precious than money;
I give you myself before preaching a law,
Shall we stick to each other as long as we live.¹³²

The Congress session of 1913 was presided over by a na-
tionalist Muslim, Nawab Syed Mohammed who had been re-
gularly attending the annual meetings of the Congress since
1894. Among the regular Muslim delegates at the Congress
was Mohammed Ali Jinnah. Both of them were friendly to
the Muslim League.

The leaders of the Indian National Congressn edeavoured
their best to utilize the newly awakened anti-British feeling

131. *Ibid*, pp. 73-4

132. *Ibid*, p. 78.

of the Muslim intelligentsia for national purposes. In their speeches and writings they told their Muslim brothers that the pressure on the alien regime could only be powerful and effective if both Hindus and Muslims could combine, forget their old animosities and antagonizing differences. The achievement of such a unity would certainly pave the way for the national progress. In the annual session of the Congress held in 1914 in an eloquent style Bhupendra Nath Basu exhorted the assembled gathering:

In our hand lies the destiny of our common country. Whether we belong to the same race or not, whether we believe in the revelations of the Gita or the Koran, we have reason to be proud of our past in India. Asoka and Chandra Gupta, Akbar and Shahjahan are the names which will rouse enthusiasm of any race and shed lustre on the followers of any creed. The Moghul Emperors saw the vision of a united India.... Let us realise that vision.¹³³

Pre War Pan-Islamic Agitation in India

Meanwhile, there took place another political development which proved more effective, than even the revision of Partition of Bengal, in arousing the Muslims against the British colonialists. Based on the wellknown dictum of Chanakya "Your enemy's enemy is your friend" the consequence of this political development paved still more effectively the way for the consolidation of Hindu-Muslim unity.

It will not be out of context to mention that till the first half of the nineteenth century Turkey used to be a great power in the Near East. But the Russo-Turkish War of 1876-78 turned Turkey into a "Sickman of Europe". The Islamic World was aroused to the fact the area of Islamic independence was steadily narrowing and the Quranic theory that Islam should dominate over every other religion was paving way for the contrary system. It was felt that the only Muslim Power which could deal with those of Europe as an equal was Turkey. The adherents of Pan-Islamism, therefore,

133. *Report the annual session of the Congress held in 1914.*

everywhere started inculcating the doctrine that Turkey should be strengthened and supported.

The preachers sent at that time to popularize Khilafat in India might have had a hearing, but pan-Islamism in this country did not become a live force until it was stimulated by events in 1911. In the autumn of that year war was declared between Italy and Turkey and shortly afterwards Persia was partially occupied in the north by Russia and in the South by the British. These events resulted in Muhammadan unrest in Northern India regarding which Mr. Petrie, who was then Assistant Director of the Intelligence Bureau, made enquiries in the Punjab. His report prepared in February 1912 showed that the belief, held up to that time by Muhammadans in India, that the British Government was a safe custodian of Islamic interests, was rapidly evaporating; and further that a rumour was gaining credence to the effect that the Christian Powers had set themselves of deliberate purpose to encompass the ruin of Islam, with which object Great Britain had entered into a secret alliance with Italy with respect to the latter's attack on Turkey. He pointed out that the belief in this rumour had been strengthened by the annulment of Partition of Bengal towards the close of 1911, which was viewed with dismay by Bengali Muslims, and, since the Partition of 1905 had been announced as "a settled fact", its annulment was regarded as a breach of faith on the part of Government. In the course of his report, Mr. Petrie indicated that Zafar Ali Khan, the editor of the *Zamindar* of Lahore, and Muhammad Ali, the editor of the *Comrade* of Calcutta, were among the most probable leaders of any Muhammadan agitation which might occur in India.¹³⁴

In July 1912 he wrote an addendum in which the following passage occurs; "The most serious result of the influences that have been at work is that general unsettling of Muhammadan confidence in the British Government and the deep-seated mistrust that has been aroused of the purity and uprightness of its intentions towards Islam. The cry of the impending destruction of Islam by Christianity has moved

134. P.C. Bamford, Deputy-Director of Central Intelligence Bureau, *Histories of Non-co-operation and Khilafat Movement* (Government of India Printing Press, 1925), pp. 110-11.

many to whom questions of ordinary politics could make no appeal, and it is unfortunate that circumstances should have so combined as to make it possible for an improbable tale to receive a very wide degree of credence."¹³⁵

Referring to the growing black-out of Muslim loyalty to British Imperialism he also added that the belief that the British Government was no longer a safe custodian of Islamic interests was gaining ground in more enlightened quarters, and with the spread of that belief there arose the problem how best Mahammadans could protect those special interests which they believed the contemporary Government had set itself either weakly or treacherously to betray. In what direction the Muhammadan politicians might turn it was hardly yet possible to say, though a union with the Congress party seemed a probable solution. Expressing his alarm over the growth of communal unity he remarked:

At the moment many of the barriers to a Hindu Muhammadan union have thus been thrown down, and the modern Muhammadan is too fully cognisant of the success of Hindu methods of agitation not to appreciate the advantages of such an alliance. But the Muhammadan is less quiescent and much quicker to action than the Hindu, and it is quite possible that events in Turkey or elsewhere might occur to rouse Muslim feeling to immediate action, independently of the matured policy of their leading politicians. Such action would probably take the shape of local outbreaks, such as the recent Beadon Square affair of Calcutta, though they would no doubt be on a more serious scale. At any rate the whole situation is such as to call for very close and intelligent study and for very careful observation.¹³⁶

In the light of subsequent events his forecast of the probable result of trouble with Turkey had proved true.

In the meantime new political developments were taking place in the Near East. The tribulations of Turkey did not

135. Ibid, p. 112.

136. Ibid.

end with the termination of the Italian-Turkish War, for she was then involved in hostilities in the Balkans, which dragged on throughout 1912. This served to maintain Muhammadan unrest in India, and radical Muslims did not hesitate to identify the whole of Europe with the Balkan states. Thus we find Abul Kalam Azad, early in 1913, advocating the boycott of European goods and in Calcutta some militant Hindus took part in these boycott meetings.¹³⁷

Maulana Abul Kalam Azad was the most outstanding personality among the Nationalist Muslims i.e., those Muslims who stood with the Indian National Congress in its national liberation movement from British colonialists and refused to be a part to any movement associated with Muslim separatism. In his political views the Maulana was a religio-politically radical mind. By his inspiring and exhorting style of writing and by equally commendable ideals of nationalism, freedom and sacrifice he swayed the younger Muslim intelligentsia to revolt against the colonial order. Referring to the Muslim discontent in a symbolic form to the weather he remarked in his paper *Al Hilal* on 20 June 1913:

The greater the heat of summer, equally greater is the conviction that rain will come.... The Muslim World today is on the verge of a final, decisive revolution and the portents which have always appeared before the fruition of the greatest revolutions of the past are apparent in it all around. Those mighty revolutions which completely overturned the world, those great changes which all of a sudden changed the courses of the histories of the nations and kingdoms,...those which dismantled the structures of the civilizations and cultures and habits and characteristics of men and people...had the same scenes before and around them, heralding them as are apparent today.... The care for tomorrow is before every individual today. The worry for the future is now not the privilege of the chosen few,¹³⁸

137. Ibid.

138. K.P. Karunakaran, ed., *Modern Indian Political Tradition*, n. 14, pp. 260-61.

It may casually be mentioned that *Al Hilal* had acquired an unprecedented fame in those days. "Few papers in the history of Indian Journalism", wrote Yusuf Meherally, "have exercised an influence as compared to that of *Al-Hilal*."¹³⁹ Within a short span of time it had a circulation of 11,000 and reached 25,000 during the War.¹⁴⁰

The periodical vehemently attacked the policies of the alien regime and therefore, shortly afterwards its publication was banned by the Government.

Another influential paper of this period was the *Zamindar* published from Lahore and edited by a born rebel, Zafar Ali Khan. The editor was staunch nationalist and thoroughly anti-British. His powerful editorials had very wide influence. He was issuing 20,000 copies of his paper twice a day—an unheard-of circulation for the Vernacular Press; for the first time the Muslims of North India were awakening to a new consciousness powerfully. "They eagerly drank in the seditious propaganda that the *Zamindar* offered them."¹⁴¹

In March 1913 a *fatwa* was published in the *Aligarh Institute Gazette* in which it was urged that Muhammadans, being brothers of the oppressed Turks, should curse those who, seeing oppression, wished to help the oppressors, and that no opportunity should be lost to impair the enemies of Turkey. It was specially added that the British were not exempt from the application of this *fatwa*.¹⁴² In Lucknow Maulvi Wahid-ud-Din Salim in his paper, the *Muslim Gazette*, deprecated open expressions of loyalty on the part of Muhammadans. He stated that the Quranic injunction to obey God and Government only applied to Muslim rulers.¹⁴³

In the month of April 1913 a scheme was published by Mushir Hussain Kidwai of Gudia, Barabanki, United Provinces, for the formation of a society called the "Anjuman-i-Khuddam-i-Kaaba". This organization was supported by the

139. Yusuf Meherally, *Leaders of India* (Bombay, 1938), p. 60.

140. Mahadev Desai, *Maulana Abul Kalam Azad* (Agra, 1945), pp. 47 & 54.

141. W.C. Smith, n. 95, p. 196.

142. P.C. Bamford, n. 134, p. 112.

143. *Ibid*, p. 113.

Ali Brothers—Muhammad and Shaukat and by Abul Kalam Azad and Abdul Bari, all of whom were subsequently to take a very active part in the Khilafat Movement.¹⁴⁴

Phase of Unity

Meanwhile the Ali Brothers had shifted their press activities from Calcutta to Delhi at the end of 1912. The Anti-British approach of their two journals viz the *Comrade* in English and the *Hamdard* in Urdu made these journals widely known. They swelled the prevailing political enthusiasm in favour of nationalism. Indians in general and Muslims in particular subscribed them in preponderant numbers. The policy of these weeklies, besides assisting the Muslim community to take its proper share in the political life of the country, was to inculcate in their people the fact that they should never lose sight of the prospects of the coming times when ultimately all communal interests had to be adjusted in order to harmonize with the paramount interests of the nation. All the centrifugal forces were to be curbed. The lines of religious cleavage were to be brought nearer to the unity. The future India would be a federation of united faiths. It was in order to translate, stated Maulana Mohamed Ali some years later, this into reality that he had started his weekly newspaper, and had significantly called it the *Comrade*—comrade of all and partisan of none.¹⁴⁴ In pursuance of this policy the editor contributed the following extract in the first issue of the *Comrade* on 14 January 1911:

It is our firm belief that if the Mussalmans or the Hindus attempt to achieve success in opposition to, or even without the co-operation of one another they will not only fail, but fail ignominiously.... The problems of India are almost international. But when the statesmen and philanthropists of Europe, with all its wars of interests and national jealousies, do not despair of abolishing war and placing Pax on the throne of Bellona, shall we despair of Indian nationality?... We may not create today the patriotic fervour and the fine national frenzy of Japan with its forty millions

144. *Congress Presidential Addresses*, n. 126, p. 623.

of homogeneous people. But a concordat like that of Canada is not beyond the bounds of practicability.... *A marriage de Convenance*, honourably contracted and honourably maintained, is not to be despised. Let us begin with honest prose.... It is one worthy of the sons and daughters of India, and deserves their toil and self-sacrifice. O! Unity,

‘Thou wilt come, join men,
Knit nation unto nation.’¹⁴⁵

The sentiments in favour of Hindu-Muslim unity manifesting the growing spirit of nationalism were perhaps remarkably formidable. The two communities, however, distinctive in their socio-religious and even political matters, combined against their common adversary. The nationalist intelligentsia from both the communities appealed and exhorted their people to unite together for the national progress. Especially worth mentioning remained the role of the newly emerging Muslim intelligentsia which appeared to be not communal in approach but had imbibed the spirit of secularism and patriotism substantially. In the period just preceding the World War I this new class on whom the alien regime had previously relied much, began to express their resentment against the antagonizing policies of the alien regime. Now this intelligentsia was quick to co-operate with its counterpart among Hindus to make the both united to eradicate the evils of the alien system. In his poem recited on Hindu-Muslim unity at 1912 Congress Syed Mohamed Ismail stipulated:

It is long since that this nation
is lying in a pit.
The heartfelt desire now is that its
wretchedness may be removed...
You have fallen down from the sky of loftiness,
Don't you perceive at all your ignominy?...
Disunion is a bad thing, give it up,
In whatever way it may be possible
Mutual love and goodwill must prevail.¹⁴⁶

145. These lines have been taken from the extract on Indian unity quoted by Maulana Mohamed Ali in his Presidential Address at the 1923 session of the Indian National Congress; see *Congress Presidential Addresses*, n. 126, pp. 624-25.

146. *Report of the annual session of the Indian National Congress held in 1912*, p. 46-7.

In their distress the Muslims got universal sympathy from their Hindu brethren who made it a joint issue of survival or extinction for both of them. It clearly demonstrated that in times of danger and distress the two communities could act jointly and would be able to evolve a new ideology of nationalism if they could remain immune from the application of the maximum of *Divide et Impera* by a third alien ruling power. In his speech delivered at the 1912 Congress Babu Surendra Nath Banerjea, in his eloquent style stated:

Let me assure you that the troubles and tribulations of Islam have awakened a deep and responsive echo in the heart of the great Hindu community in India.... We deeply sympathise...with you, my Mohamedan fellow-countrymen, in your sorrow for the misfortunes of Islam. May this feeling of solidarity and growing sympathy between Hindus and Mohamedans increase and deepen to the mutual advantages of both the communities and to the abiding, lasting and permanent benefits of the motherland to which we all belong.¹⁴⁷

The minds of the Indian Muslims were greatly influenced by the expressions of these brotherly and sympathetic feelings by the nationalist-minded people among the Hindus, for them in their grief. This sympathetic approach in adversity on the part of the nationalists among Hindus played a very significant role in enrolling the educated Muslims to the ranks of nationalist organisations like the Indian National Congress. It also accelerated their endeavour and determination to work with their Hindu fellows. No longer there was witnessed any quarrel over the distribution of the jobs in the Civil Service or elsewhere. The Muslim leaders called upon their co-religionists to interest themselves in the nationalist activities besides being actively engaged in supporting the cause of their co-religionists in Turkey. They told them that their neglect of India's interests was almost sinful. These changed sentiments of the Muslim intelligentsia appeared to become a source of great power to the national cause and made the situation more optimistic from the standpoint of Indian nationalism.

The members of the Muslim League also tried for an increasing rapprochement between Hindus and Muslims. The attitude of Britain and other European Powers in regard to their co-religionists abroad hastened their conversion to the view that they needed the support, sympathy and equitable settlement with the majority community of India. And the time too was ripe for the unity. To display their new approach the members of the All-India Muslim League during its session held in Lucknow in 1913 adopted a resolution which recorded :

its firm belief that the future development and progress, of the people of India depend on the harmonious working and co-operation of the various communities and hopes that leaders on both sides will periodically meet together to find a *modus operandi* for joint and concerted action on questions of public good.¹⁴⁸

A salient feature of the annual session was an appeal made by the President to start a United India League, open to all classes and creeds, with a view to the evolution of a common Indian nationality. The League also condemned mischievous attempts to widen the breach between Hindus and Muslims.¹⁴⁹

During the course of a speech as President of the U.P. Muslim League held at Agra on 24 December 1913, Syed Aly Nabi expressed the hope that

to my mind the unification of the two most important people inhabiting this country is bound to come gradually and imperceptibly as sure as the day follows night without forcing our pace for it...with all those disintegrating forces which are working so forcibly and before which the old order of things is giving place to the new. On our efforts in the direction of self-improvement depends that unification which we at present cry for.¹⁵⁰

The Hindu nationalists which were awaiting for such a response from the Muslim colleagues for a long time, were

148. *The Indian Review* (Madras, 1914), Vol. XV, p. 43.

149. P.C. Bamford, n. 134, p. 113.

150. *The Indian Review*, n. 148, p. 43.

intelligent enough not to miss such a golden opportunity. Perhaps ideologically they were very little interested in whether the Turkish power declined or progressed, but because the Muslims had their grudge against the foreign power due to its anti-Muslim policies in Middle East, and had started expressing their dissatisfaction against the same adversary against whom they had been struggling for the last so many years, they also combined with the Muslim educated class to exhort the people to work for communal unity and thereby advance the cause of nationalism. In his presidential address delivered at the annual meeting of the United Provinces Conference in 1913 Dr. Satish Chandra Bannerjee enquired whether both of them were not Indian before they were either Hindu or Muslim? Was not their elevation as political units, as citizens, indissolubly and organically linked with the progress of their country? Did both of them not wish that Indians should occupy respectable status in the comity of world nations, that a better form of government be replaced for the existing lower quality, that the administration of justice should be made completely impartial by placing it above all cavil and doubt? Born in the same land, educated under similar conditions and ruled by a common foreign power, governed in all general matters by identical legal jurisprudence, all of them had been striving for common cause and a common ideal viz; the achievement of regenerated India.¹⁵¹

Cawnpore oppression and anti-British Movements

In these circumstances which were quite unfavourable to the perpetuation of imperialist rule in India, there occurred the Cawnpore Mosque incident on 3 August 1913. In that city a big hostile demonstration was organised by both Hindus and Muslims as a result of the removal of a platform adjoining a mosque. In the scuffle that ensued the police opened fire. The demonstrators responded by throwing the missiles of stone on the *gendarmie*. In consequence several people were killed by the police. The scene of disturbance was visited by Muslim leaders, including Mohammed Ali, who used the incident to foment agitation against Government. Khwaja Hasan Nizami

151. From the Presidential Address published in the *Indian Review* (Madras, 1913), Vol. XIV, pp. 819-20.

of Delhi issued an inflammatory pamphlet which was eventually proscribed, and a leaflet was found stating that India was no longer Dar-ul-Aram—land of peace—but was Dar-ul-Harab, where it was the duty of the Faithful to slay infidels.¹⁵²

On the other hand, the feudal apologists of British Imperialism tried to sabotage the movement. The Nawab of Rampur convened a meeting at Delhi on 1 October 1913, which was attended by a number of Muhammadans from Northern India to consider the so-called “remedial measures” to “relieve the present tension of feeling among Muhammadans and to assure Government of the genuine loyalty of the community to the British Throne.” The meeting, however, proved to be abortive and the situation was not eased until the colonial authorities yielded to the Muslim demand. The Viceroy visited Cawnpore and sanctioned the re-construction of a platform at the place of dispute.¹⁵³

Mohammed Ali, after this incident, went to Europe, visiting Cairo en route where he was reported to have stated that England would not rule for long in India. He also was alleged to have said that Muhammadans in India were preparing to subscribe the cost of a dread nought as a contribution to the approaching struggle for freedom.¹⁵⁴

Towards the end of 1913, the All-India Muslim League held a session at Agra. In his presidential speech Sir Ibrahim Rahimtollah stated that no country could remain for ever under foreign rule however beneficial that rule might be, and added, “India is our motherland, our proud heritage and must in the end be handed over to us by our guardians.”¹⁵⁵

In the middle of 1914 attempts were made to revive agitation with respect to the Cawnpore Mosque affair and Muslims who had taken part in the compromise were urged, in a pamphlet issued from Bareilly, to admit their error and to explain to Government that no portion of a mosque could be demolished and replaced as had been done at Cawnpore. Early in

152. P.C. Bamford, n. 134, p. 114.

153. Ibid.

154. Ibid.

155. Ibid.

July 1914, a trifling incident in a bioscope film, which had been shown at Karachi during the previous month, was utilised to inflame the minds of Muslims against Government. The picture was denounced as an insult to the Prophet, and the *Comrade* alleged that it was a manifestation of a deep laid plot engineered by Christian missionaries to bring disgrace upon Islam.¹⁵⁸

At this juncture the attitude of the *Comrade* became sharply anti-British. The editor sneered at any loyal effusion which appeared. Zafar Ali Khan, the editor of the *Zamindar* did not lag behind and at the end of September he made an objectionable speech at Lahore, in consequence of which he was ordered to reside in his village and to refrain from taking any part in journalism or politics. Maulana Mohammad Ali, of course, criticized strongly this curtailment of the liberties of his supporters.¹⁵⁹

Efforts for Unity during the War

Early in February 1915, a leaflet was distributed and broadcast over the loudspeaker in Delhi. It enquired why Muslims should remain loyal to a government which demanded every sacrifice without any return, and concluded by appealing to the Hindus and Muhammadans to forget their differences and, for the sake of their honour, self-respect and country, to unite in opposition to the tyrant. Continuous propaganda of this nature was bound to produce some result and the first effected were a section of the Muslim students in various colleges in Lahore who abandoned their studies and crossed the North-West Frontier on the grounds that India was Dar-ul-Harab.¹⁶⁰ This incident is of some importance as these students subsequently took an active part in the Silk Letter Conspiracy, which will be referred later.

Bombay Session of the League

In the latter part of 1915, the question of holding a session (which had been suspended during the previous year) of the All-India Muslim League was discussed. In spite of opposi-

158. Ibid. For further study see Ibid, pp. 117-19.

159. Ibid, p. 119.

160. Ibid, pp. 120-21.

tion from a section of Muhammadans in Bombay it was eventually decided to hold a meeting of the League in that city during X'mas week of 1915.¹⁶¹ The opposition chiefly came from the Sunnis, a highly orthodox section among Muslims, who emphasized that it was perfectly useless to trouble the British Government for concessions while war was being waged and that though Sunni Muhammadans were bound by deep sentimental ties to the person of the Khalifa, their best course was to remain quite until peace was declared and then to submit their claim for recognition by the British Government.¹⁶² Their opponents led by Muhammad Ali Jinnah¹⁶³, on the other hand, were equally determined to hold a meeting of the League at Bombay in order to come to mutual understanding with the Hindus on the subject of self-government. The renowned nationalist Muslim Mazhar-ul-Haq presided over the meeting, but as both he and Mr. Jinnah were disliked by orthodox Muhammadans on account of their affectation of the modern mode of living, dissension arose and the meeting eventually broke up. On new Year's day 1916, however, the adjourned meeting of the League was reconvened. The local Sunnis were conspicuous by their absence. At this meeting the Raja of Mhamudabad was elected president of the All-India Muslim League in place of the Aga Khan.

All this was a remarkable development in the direction of national unity. Actually speaking, Bombay had the good fortune to see the Indian National Congress and the Muslim League meet for the first time in the same city. The new spirit brought Hindus and Muslims together in loving and brotherly service for the common cause. The unjust attitude of the orthodox *Sunni* opponents, although for the time being, caused the utmost anxiety and individual risks, one cannot help saying, rendered the greatest service to the national cause. It served only to stiffen the secular forces. The League,

161. Ibid, p. 121.

162. Ibid, p. 121.

163. It may be recalled that Jinnah entered the sphere of Indian politics in 1906, the year in which Badruddin Tyabji died. Being an adherent of secularism like Tyabji he joined the Indian National Congress under the guidance of Dadabhai Naoroji and Surendra Nath Banerjee. In 1910 he was elected a Member of Viceroy's Executive Council as a representative of the Muslims of Bombay, where, alongwith Gokhale, he supported the policy of the Congress on all

in the words of Jinnah, rose phoenix-like stronger, more solidified and determined in its ideals.¹⁶⁴

At this time considerable internal friction existed in the Punjab branch of the Muslim League, of which the younger and more militant spirits were dissatisfied with the policy of their loyalist and communalist secretary, Mian Muhammad Shafi. His opponents were strengthened by the support of Wazir Hassan and Mazhar-ul-Haq whose displeasure Shafi had incurred by his determined opposition to the meeting of the League at Bombay. They saw in him an obstacle to the joint League and Congress policy of political education, and it was argued that, as the term of office under the constitution was limited to three years the fact that there had been no election of office-bearers for four years, automatically terminated the existence of the League. Therefore, a meeting to reconstitute the provincial League was held in Lahore, shortly after the Bombay meeting. On the other hand, Mian Shafi also summoned a meeting of the old League at which he was reappointed Secretary and Sir Behram Khan Mozari was elected President. This resulted in two provincial branches of the Muslim League in the Punjab, and for the time being, the weight of public opinion appeared to be on the side of the new branch of the League.

Lucknow Pact

It may be mentioned here that towards the end of 1915 the British Parliament had passed the Reforms Bill under the name of the Government of India Act, 1915. But it was reject-

legislative issues. Gokhale exercised a tremendous influence upon Jinnah who in April 1913 accompanied Gokhale on a visit to England. There he came in contact with Maulana Mohammed Ali and Syed Wazir Hasan and was persuaded by them to become the member of the Muslim League in order to "bring the policy of the League into line with the progressive and national aims of the Congress." [Hector Bolitho, *Jinnah: Creator of Pakistan* (London, John Murray, 1954), p. 57.] This was a turning point of his political career. He was now regarded a trusted leader of both the Congress and the League. In 1914 he was sent to England by the Congress and the League as a representative of Indian nation to put forth its case about the bill which was being considered in order to introduce political reforms in India.

164. K P. Karunakaran, n. 14, p. 247.

ed both by the Congress and the League. Thereafter a Joint Committee was set up to consider the demands to be put forth on behalf of the Indian nation and to recommend special concessions for the Muslim community. The recommendations of the Committee were endorsed both by the Congress and the League in their Lucknow session. This came to be known as the Lucknow Pact in the history of the national liberation movement. Its importance lay in the fact that the National Congress came to an understanding with the League. The leaders of the Congress had come to realise by this time that in the affairs of their common secular existence they had to deal not with angels but with men with passions, prejudices, personal idiosyncrasies, innumerable cross currents of motive, desire, hope, fear and hate. The national problem had all such formidable complications in its texture. The internal situation in India, when reviewed purely from an unbiased angle, was found to be a set of social, ethnological and cultural conditions unparalleled in recorded history. The vast contingent of its people sprang from various racial stocks, and professed a variety of religious creeds. In order to keep together this stupendous human group for nation-building, which was still passing through various stages of intellectual growth and modern development, the Indian nationalists displayed a remarkable farsightendness in conceding the demand of separate electorate. They behaved like Lenin who was perhaps aware of the fact that he must take one step back in order to go two steps forward. Moreover, all the indigenous forces had to be kept united in order to array them against the common adversary of British Imperialism whose guardians like Rushbrook Williams lost no time in lamenting over the fact that the tree of Muslim League planted by them some times back, had become less representative of conservative Muslim opinion in India.¹⁶⁵ Still another guardian of imperialism, P. C. Bamford had decried in a lukewarm and contemptuous fashion, "The League at this period had become little more than an adjunct to the Congress."¹⁶⁶

Another commendable feature of the Congress-League Scheme was that both the sides were pervaded by the spirit

165. Statement cited by P.C. Bamford, n. 134, p. 119.

166. Ibid.

of "give and take". An understanding to give Muslim minorities in Hindu majority provinces an increased representation in Legislatures and other elective bodies was balanced by a proviso of similar privileges to be given to the Hindu minorities in the Muslim majority provinces of Bengal and the Punjab.¹⁶⁷

The significance of the Lucknow Pact in the career of Jinnah was still greater. He had achieved his objective of bringing together the intellectual classes of Hindus and Muslims and was welcomed by both to be their respected and trusted leader. Hailing the new epoch in his presidential address delivered at the Lucknow session of the League in December 1916 he remarked:

The circumstances...in which we meet today are exceptional and mark a new epoch in the history of our country. All that is great and inspiring in the common affairs of men for which the noblest and most valiant of mankind have lived and wrought and suffered in all ages and all climes is now moving India to its depths. The whole country is awakening to the call of destiny and is scanning the new horizons with eager and hope. A new spirit of earnestness, confidence and resolution is aboard in the land. In all directions are visible the stirring of a new life. The Mussalmans of India would be false to themselves and the traditions of their past, had they not shared to the full the new hope that is moving India's patriotic sons today, or had they failed to respond to the call of their country. Their gaze like that of their Hindu fellow-countrymen is fixed on the future.

Referring to the Muslim responsibility Jinnah continued:

The decisions that you may take in this historic hall at this historic session of the League will go forth with all the force and weight that can legitimately be claimed by the chosen leaders and representatives of 70 million of Indian Mussalmans. On the nature of those decisions will depend in a large measure the fate of

167. For further study see Karunakaran, n. 14, pp. 286-92.

India's future, of India's unity and of our common ideals and aspirations for constitutional freedom.¹⁶⁸

This very Jinnah who later on became the exponent of the view that the Hindus and Muslims of India were two separate nations, was in those days the most articulate champion of a secular and democratic attitude towards politics. His presidential address was representative of this progressive trend of thought among Indian Muslims. He had then said, "Amid the class of warring interests and the noise of foolish catch-words no cool-headed student of Indian affairs can lose sight of the great obvious truism that India is the first and the last resort for the Indians....No force in the world can rob them of their destiny and thwart the purpose of providence."¹⁶⁹ Equally categorical was he in stating that indeed the person who failed to read in the Hindu-Muslim rapprochement the first great sign of the "birth of a United India" had little knowledge of the political conditions of a few years ago, and had no business to talk of India.¹⁷⁰ He concluded his address by calling upon Muslims to show by their words and deeds that they sincerely and honestly desired a healthy national unity. Let them no longer give the wrong impression of standing for self-interest and self-gain, he added.¹⁷¹

It would, however, be mistaken to presume that the progressive rapprochement between Hindus and Muslims was easily tolerated by the conservatives in both the communities. They left no stone unturned, though their efforts proved abortive, to lead a fanatic crusade against the understanding of the Congress and the League. It is undeniable that in the process of accusing a betrayal of the interests of Islam and Hinduism the conservatives and orthodox on both sides got some success in formenting some communal trouble in Bihar and the United Provinces.¹⁷²

The advanced nationalists could not brook this insult to the cause of country's progress. In order to obliterate the

168. Ibid, pp. 239-40.

169. Ibid, pp. 244-45.

170. Ibid, pp. 248,

171. Ibid, p. 256.

172. For further study see Bamford, n. 134, p. 130.

communalists they accelerated their campaign against British Imperialism and its indigenous allies. In his extempore address at a meeting of the Muslim League held at Calcutta in December 1917 the Raja of Mahmudabad made some remarks which were considered objectionable by the colonialist rulers.¹⁷³ Another feature of this session of the League was the concern shown for Ali Brothers, whose internment had caused a considerable amount of agitation during the year. A Calcutta Muhammadan in the course of his speech threatened Government that if the Ali Brothers were not released, the whole Muhammadan community would renounce the honours and resign the posts conferred on them by Government.¹⁷⁴

The protagonists of anti-British agitation did not cease to make efforts to stir up trouble with respect to the War. Early in the year an anonymous leaflet appeared in Delhi, urging Muslims to "engage in jihad and drink the cup of martyrdom." In February, at a meeting of Muhammadans in Calcutta, two or three speakers used violent language in advocating the adoption of passive resistance in connection with their demands for the release of the interned Muslims.¹⁷⁵

In the middle of 1917, however, agitation was stimulated by a derogatory phrase used by the *Indian Daily News*—a Calcutta paper—in describing a Muhammadan municipal employee in Paris, which was regarded by Muhammadans as an insult to the Prophet. Indignation meetings were held in various parts of the country at which violent speeches were made and Government were threatened that unless the editor of the offending newspaper was punished, Muhammadans would consider the declaration of *Jihad*.¹⁷⁶ At about this time Muhammadan papers published garbled accounts of incidents which had occurred in various parts of India and which offended, either in reality or in imagination, the Muslim faith—and religious feeling in Calcutta ran very high.¹⁷⁷

In the beginning of September a deputation of Muhammadans was received by the Governor of Bengal who, however,

173. Ibid.

174. Ibid.

175. Ibid.

176. Ibid, p. 131.

177. Ibid.

did not accede to their request to permit a meeting. In the meantime a crowd of some 500 Muhammadans proceeded towards Government House and when they were stopped by the Police, serious disturbances ensued which spread to other parts of Calcutta and continued for two days.¹⁷⁸

The Presidential address delivered by Fazl-ul-Haq at the Delhi session of the League in 1918, consisted of a long account of the evil effects of British rule in India, such as might have been delivered at any Congress meeting.¹⁷⁹

Anti-British feelings reached their climax at the same session when Maulana Abdul Bari of Lucknow as the most important speaker on the resolution asking for the evacuation of the Holy Places took exception to the Union Jack having been used in decorating the hall, saying that although it was the flag of Britain, it contained the emblem of the Cross, which Muhammadans could not respect.¹⁸⁰

Hakim Ajmal Khan was chairman of the Reception Committee of the Session of the Indian National Congress which assembled at Delhi in 1918. In his speech he laid emphasis on Hindu-Muslim unity.¹⁸¹

Religious Nationalism

Along with secular nationalism which was given impetus by leaders like S.N. Banerjea, Dadabhoy Naoroji, Mr. Jinnah, Raja of Mahamudabad, Mazhar-ul-Haq, there was also operating on the Indian political scene the religious nationalism. Judged from the stand point of modernity this quality of nationalism looked quite fanatic, out-moded, obscurantist and obsolete, yet in the given historical circumstances and backward social set-up and underdeveloped form of economic growth of the country this kind of nationalism certainly played a progressive role, when it attempted to overthrow British imperialism by collaborating with the anti-colonialist sections among Hindus, Parsis, and Sikhs.

178. Ibid.

179. Ibid, p. 133.

180. Ibid.

181. Ibid, p. 134.

The movement of religious nationalism among Muslims was led by Shaikh-ul-Hind Maulana Mahmud-ul-Hasan (1851-1920). He was among the first batch of students to be educated at the Deoband Seminary in Saharanpur district of Uttar Pradesh. He was regarded as a brilliant student and a favourite disciple of Maulana Muhammad Qasim Nanotvi. In 1905 when Maulana Rashid Ahmad Ganghi died, Maulana Mahmud-ul-Hasan succeeded him as the academic head of the institution.

Maulana Mahmud-ul-Hasan inherited from his two predecessors not only their knowledge and piety but also their love for freedom. In fact, his passion for liberty was even more intense than theirs. He had made a thorough study of the history of India and its present political and economic conditions and the regular reading of newspapers kept him in touch with current affairs. No sooner had he taken over responsibility of guiding the destiny of the Deoband seminary, he formed a group of some of his most sincere and sensible disciples under the name of *Jaimat-ul-Ansar*, and began to train them as pioneers of a national liberation. The most trusted of them was a young man from a Sikh family of the Punjab who, after accepting the Islamic faith, had made Sind his home and was known as Obaidullah Sindhi.

Maulana Mahmud-ul-Hasan sent Obaidullah to Delhi to propagate his ideas among the modern educated youth and to win them over for his movement. Two books were put into circulation preaching militancy and impressing the supreme duty of crusade. In August 1915 Obaidullah with three others, Abdulla, Fateh Muhammad and Muhammad Ali was sent to Kabul where many of the old disciples of the Maulana were sincerely interested in the national liberation movement. Their object was to try, in collaboration with Raja Mahendra Pratap, to free India with the assistance of the governments of Germany, Turkey and Afghanistan. So they set up a Provisional National Government under Raja Mahendra Pratap. In the new government Obaidullah himself was to be Minister of India; and Barkatullah, a friend of renowned revolutionary, Krishnavarma and a member of the American *Ghadar* Party, who had also travelled to Kabul via Berlin was to be the Prime Minister. Son of an employee of the Bhopal State, he had visited England, America and Japan. He had

been appointed Professor of Hindustani at Tokyo. He had there edited a strongly anti-British paper called *The Islamic Fraternity*, which was suppressed by the Japanese authorities. He had later been relieved from his job and had joined his *Ghadar* friends.

• The Provisional Government began to prepare for national independence. Fraternal contacts were established with Turko-German Mission. They also tried to establish contacts with Russia and Japan and sent their mission to those countries. Letters were dispatched to these states inviting them to break their alliance with Britain and assist in the overthrow of British rule in India. These letters were signed by Raja Mahendra Pratap and subsequently fell into British hands. The letter to the Czar was on a gold plate.

The Provisional Government also proposed to form an alliance with Turkey, and in order to accomplish this object Obaidullah addressed a letter to his old teacher, Maulana Mahmud-ul-Hassan. This, together with another letter dated the 8th Ramzan (9th July 1916), written by Muhammad Mian Ansari, was forwarded under a covering note addressed to Sheikh Abdur Rahim of Hyderabad, Sind, a person who had since absconded. Sheikh Abdur Rahim was requested in the note to send on the enclosures by hand of some reliable hajji, (pilgrim) to Mahmud Hassan at Mecca, or even to convey them himself if no trustworthy messengers were obtainable. These letters to Mahmud Hassan, however, fell into British hands. They were neatly and clearly written on yellow silk. Muhammad Mian's letter mentioned the previous arrival of German and Turkish missions, the return of the Germans, the staying on of the Turks, "but without work", the runaway students, the circulation of the "Ghalibnama" in the "provisional Government", and the projected formation of an "Army of God". This army was to draw recruits from India and to bring about an alliance among Islamic rulers. Mahmud Hassan was to convey all these particulars to the Ottoman Government. Obaidullah's letter contained a tabular statement of the "Army of God". Its headquarters were to be at Medina, and Mahmud Hassan himself was to be General-in-Chief. Secondary headquarters under local generals were to be established at Constantinople, Teheran and Kabul. The General at Kabul would be Obaidullah himself. The table con-

tained the names of three patrons, 12 field marshals, and many other high military officers. Of the Lahore students, one was to be a major-general, one a colonel, and six lieutenant-colonels.¹⁸²

The Afghan King, Amir Habibullah Khan and, to a greater extent, his successor, Amanullah Khan were in sympathy with the Provisional Government. But pressure from the British Government forced them to make a show of being strict with these revolutionaries. With the defeat of Germany in 1918 their scheme to stir up an armed revolution in India with the help of foreign powers, fell flat. But they clung to hope in the midst of despair, until increasing pressure from the British Government made it impossible for the Afghan King to shelter them and they dispersed and left for different countries.

Maulana Mahud-ul-Hassan's revolutionary zeal was at work in India too. He had realized that in order to liberate India, the religious-minded Muslims would have to act in collaboration with the modern, educated Muslims as well as with other communities. Accordingly, he established close links with nationalist Muslim leaders like Maulana Abul Kalam Azad,¹⁸³ Maulana Muhammad Ali and Dr Ansari, and with Hindu, Muslim and Sikh members of revolutionary groups. His favourite disciple and comrade, Maulana Husain Ahmad Madani, writes in his autobiography:

182. P.C. Bamford, n. 134, p. 124,

183. It may be recalled that in March 1916, Maulana Azad delivered a lecture on slavery at his school Dar-ul-Irshad. He stated that the *Quran* forbade Muhammadans to remain in subjection, and that since a country like India which had once been under Muhammadan rule should never be relinquished, it was incumbent on them to strive to regain their lawful control. Shortly afterwards, the Government of Bengal, on account of his activities in that province, externed Abul Kalam Azad and since similar orders had been passed he took up his residence in Ranchi in April 1916. Fazl-ul-Hassan Hasrat Mohani, the wellknown leader of Aligarh, was interned by the United Provinces Government at Lalitpur in the Jhansi District at about the same time. It was learnt that he intended to go to Kabul whence both he and Abul Kalam were reported to have received communications from Barkatullah of the Provisional Government of India. Hasrat Mohani was subsequently sentenced to two years' imprisonment for failing to comply with the internment order. [P.C. Bamford, n. 134, p. 126.]

Hazrat Shaikh-ul-Hind had rented a separate accommodation near his own.... It was guest house for his like-minded non-Muslim friends and his revolutionary comrades. In his moments of leisure, during the day or at night Hazrat Shaikh-ul-Hind would go by himself to meet them and converse with them. They were mostly Sikh or Bengali Hindu revolutionaries (connected with the agitation for the Partition of Bengal).¹⁸⁴

According to a report of the U.P. Intelligence Department the revolutionary Muslims from the North-West Frontier had also been received at his house.¹⁸⁵

Obviously the colonialists regarded Maulana Mahmud-ul-Hassan as a very dangerous person, especially during the War, and kept him under strict surveillance. After sending Maulana Obaidullah Sindhi to Kabul in 1915 he came to know that the Government was thinking of arresting him. He, therefore, left India with the idea of first going to Mecca for the Hajj and then proceeding to Constantinople to seek assistance from the Turkish government for his revolutionary movement.

In Hijaz he established contacts with Ghalib Pasha, the Turkish Military Governor, who agreed to make a declaration of *Jehad* along with the Maulana. This document became known as *Ghalibnama*. Maulvi Muhammad Mian Ansari, who had accompanied Mahmud Hassan to Arabia, returned to India in 1916. While on his way he distributed copies of this document both in India and the frontier tribes. A translation of its prominent passages runs as follows:

The Muhammadans in Asia, Europe and Africa adorned themselves with all sorts of arms and ran to join the *jehad* in the path of God. Thanks to Almighty God that the Turkish Army and the *Mujahidin* have overcome the enemies of Islam.... Oh Muslim, therefore, attack the tyrannical Christian Government under whose bondage you are....¹⁸⁶

184. Maulana Husain Ahmad, *Naqsh-i-Hayat*, an autobiography with a review of current political affairs (Deoband, 1954), Vol. II, p. 207.

185. P.C. Bamford, n. 134, pp. 122-23.

186. Ibid, p. 126.

APPENDICES

A—OFFICIAL NOTES REGARDING FAMOUS REVOLUTIONARY LEADER S. AJIT SINGH (1907-09)

Simla, July 4th 1907

Daily Report of the Director of Criminal Intelligence

Punjab

Lahore—Several reprints of the seditious speeches of Ajit Singh have been made in Urdu and Hindi at the *Punjabee* press. This was done during the night time, the name of the press being, of course, omitted. A large number of these containing Ajit Singh's speeches has, it is reported, been sent to men in the army and some to the general public and on the top of the reprints there is a notice recommending the recipients to destroy after perusal. In spite of the prosecution of the editor of the *Punjabee* newspaper for sedition and of his conviction, the power for harm of the *Punjabee* press has not been diminished, and I venture to suggest that the law should, if necessary, be so amended as to make the confiscation of the press the inevitable consequence of the conviction for sedition of a newspaper which issues from it. A second suggestion which I venture to make is that as the post office is being largely used for the dissemination of seditious literature, action should be freely taken in centres where it is known to be going on, under section 26 of the post office Act. This would present no difficulty where the nature of the contents of the communication can be gathered from the outside. In other cases a large number of letters or circulars of the same outward appearance or in the same handwriting would naturally attract attention and under the circumstances justify examination.

[Home Deptt., Pol., B, August 1907, Proceeding No. 27, P. 30].

My latest information is that Ajit Singh's book will be printed in the *Hindustan* press at Lucknow. This matter is receiving attention. Our agent took occasion last week to talk

with several soldiers, including a sikh, and he says not a single one of them professed to be satisfied with British rule. The minds of all have been poisoned by Ajit Singh's speeches which have been communicated to them mainly by means of letters.

[Home Deptt., Pol., Aug. 1907, proceeding No. 34, p. 37].

Weekly Reports of the Director, Criminal Intelligence and the Government of Punjab on the political situation, (April 1908)

Simla, April 6th 1908

Punjab

Lahore—It is reported that Ajit Singh has been taken on to the editorial staff of the *Hindustan* which works under the direct supervision of Ram Bhaj Dutt and his wife, Sarala Devi, at their private houses. It is noticeable in this connection that Ram Bhaj Dutt has been importing in large number the paper called the *Circular of Freedom* in order to keep in touch with the nationalist party in the West of the United States, and that Ajit Singh is said to have established at Lahore a branch of the Indo-American National Association which will keep up connections with Mr. Myron Philips of the New York bar and his party. Recent issues of the *Hindustan* have contained examples of clever misrepresentation; in one an account was given of the shooting of two natives of India by white men in America in which the version which appeared in the American press was altered in material points, and in another, considerable skill was shown in misreporting and amplifying an interview which took place between Ajit Singh and the Deputy Commissioner of Lahore.

The Russian, named Lasseffes who was in India in 1906, suspected of being a spy, and employed Ajit Singh as *munshi*, is said to have written to one Karim Bakhs, a clerk in the North-western Railway office, stating his intention to publish a newspaper in Urdu and asking him to assist its circulation.

[Home Deptt., Pol., B, Proceedings May 1908, Nos 36-44, p. 3].

April 6th 1908

Lahore reports that Ajit Singh has published a book entitled *Muhibban-i-Watan* (patriots) which is being sold in the city at eight annas a copy. Students purchasing the book can obtain it at half price. A speech of Arabindo Ghose on the political situation in India has also been printed and published by Sufi Amba parshad. Both publications are commanding a wide sale.

Sialkot reports that Hazara Singh, Secretary of the District Association of Sialkot, and other pleaders of Sialkot who were responsible for the agitation carried on in that city last year, propose to commence giving a series of lectures in Sialkot. The proposal has not yet been carried into effect.

On the 27th March a meeting was conveyed at the Manaktala press of Lahore by Salig Ram and Arya, a book-seller, Ram Chand, proprietor of the Manaktala press, and Ishri parshad, Book-seller, which was attended by some forty persons, most of whom were book-sellers. The object of the meeting was to open a subscription on behalf of Ajit Singh. A sum of nearly Rs. 300 was collected at the meeting.

A general belief prevails that Lajpat Rai and Ajit Singh were set free owing to the outcry raised by the people against their deportation.

[Ibid, P. 10].

Intelligence Report Submitted in July 1909

On 30th April Ajit Singh returned to Lahore from Batala. On 1st May a meeting was held in the premises of the Bharat Mata [Society], Lahore, when some 5,000 people were present. Among others who addressed the meeting was Ajit Singh, and the substance of his speech on this occasion is given in Appendix No. 8.

Ajit Singh left for Rawalpindi on May 3rd. Returning to Kasur he travelled by rail from that place to Ferozepore on 5th May to attend a meeting which eventually did not take place. He returned the same day by road to Kasur. He was advertised to speak at a large meeting which had been arranged at Lyallpur for 10th May, but the arrest of Lajpat Rai

caused this project to be abandoned, and Ajit Singh did not appear.

There is little else to chronicle up to his arrest (June 1907) and deportation which caused widespread excitement in the country, as is evidenced by the reports of the numerous meetings held to express sympathy and to protest against the deportation, as also to collect funds to meet the expenses of agitation for his release. A Gurmukhi letter expressing sympathy with Ajit Singh was received through the Officer Commanding, 84th Punjabis at Multan. From inquiry it appeared probable that this was one of many similar letters which were being distributed in the Chauk Bazar by a Khatri. The letter in question was handed to native barber for delivery, to the Bhai (*sic*) at the *dharmsala* and through the agency of the Subedar Major, it was handed to the Officer-Commanding.

Lala Lajpat Rai and Ajit Singh were released in November 1907, and rejoicings were general, more especially among the Arya community. After his return to Lahore, it was reported that, though a number of visitors had called to see him, persons of the better class did not evince very much interest in him. But both he and Lajpat Rai were looked upon as national martyrs, and were given the credit of having prevented the Colonization Bill from becoming law. It is interesting to note in this connection the views held by different sections of the native community regarding Government's action in ordering the release. Hindus were generally of opinion that Government had finally become convinced of the innocence of the deportees, who were released partly to pacify Bengal and partly because government did not feel strong enough to keep them longer in confinement...

On 13th December there appeared in the *Hindustan* from the pen of Ajit Singh an article entitled "The influence of modern civilization on the truthfulness of Burma", in which the autor ascribes to modern civilization the appearance of the vices of lying and untruthfulness among a formerly truth-speaking people. Ajit Singh, in the company of Sufi Amba Parshad, left Lahore on the 22nd December 1907 to attend the All-India Nationalist Gathering at Surat. From that place he arrived in Delhi on the 6th January 1908, finally reaching Lahore on 10th January. Lahore reported that at Surat the

agitator was presented by the Extremist party with a plumed cap as an emblem of the Indian National Crown; he was said to be extremely proud of this and exhibited it wherever he went. It was further reported (though from a somewhat questionable source) that Ajit Singh while at Surat held frequent consultations with Arabindo Ghose to plan the extension of the revolutionary movement, and that two members of the Calcutta revolutionary committee were actually seen in Lahore some days prior to the Mozaffarpore bomb outrage.

About the beginning of February 1908 there were published from the pen of Ajit Singh two books called respectively "*Muhibban-i-Watan*" and "*Mutalib-i-Mal*". The former describes the lives of those who in other lands have struggled for their country's good, and the latter discussed the subject of land-tax, its increase and decrease.

On 9th March 1908 a public meeting was held in the Bradlaugh Hall, Lahore. The printed notices intimated that "Sirdar Ajit Singh would speak on the release of Bipin Chandra Pal and regarding the death of Gurdas Ram Sahni, Barrister of Rawalpindi. A full account of the proceedings and speeches is printed as Appendix No. 9.

Regarding Ajit Singh's speech on this occasion Colonel Parsons, Deputy Commissioner, wrote: "The speech was remarkable because it is the first political speech which to my knowledge Ajit Singh has deliberately made since he returned from deportation....It was a deliberate political move evidently inspired from outside the province...with a possible dual object, viz., (1) to see how far Ajit Singh would be tolerated as a political public speaker in general and (2) to try a preliminary canter towards a revival of agitation.

On 13th March Colonel Parsons sent for Ajit Singh to his house and warned him that he must endeavour to be more circumspect in his behaviour. Ajit Singh's attitude, Colonel Parsons noted, was decorous throughout, and he thanked the Deputy Commissioner for his warning. The interview, which Colonel Parsons considered entirely a private one, was subsequently published at length in the *Hindustan*, and the grossly perverted account of it which was furnished to that paper, ostensibly by Ajit Singh, was reproduced in extenso in

the *Punjabee* and freely commented on in a number of leading articles. The description represented the interview as a lengthy political discussion between the Deputy Commissioner and Ajit Singh, the honours of which were all on the side of the latter. Colonel Parsons was accused of abusing his official position in inviting to his house and treating harshly and threateningly a public man of eminence like Ajit Singh; such methods were not suited to present day conditions, the days of benevolent despotism being past. The incident evoked much discussion in the press. The publication of this interview was held by Colonel Parsons to prove conclusively that Ajit Singh was not a free agent; that the political organisers, in whose hands he was mere tool, considered the agitator somewhat depreciated after the lecture he received, and a "press defiance would act as a tonic to him and others."

For some months subsequent to the delivery of this speech Ajit Singh appears to have remained in comparative inactivity, though, generally in the company of Amba Parshad, he paid frequent visits to such places as Lyallpur, Amritsar, Jullundur and Kasur. At the last-named place Dhanpat Rai, Pleader, Father-in-law of Ajit Singh, was usually the recipient of these visits.

On 2nd May 1908 Lyallpur reported that Ajit Singh was visited by a sepoy of a native regiment in Sialkot. This man was instructed to convey to Ajit Singh the greeting of the Native Officers of the Regiment; to inform him that his book "*Mohibban-i-Watan*" had been read with appreciation in Sialkot and that more copies of it were required. On June 26th Ajit Singh at a wedding in Chak No. 205, Lyallpur, is said to have spoken to several guests complaining of the tyranny and high-handedness of the English, the attentions of the Secret police, and to have declared that it was easy to bomb English people in Railway trains (para 1971 S.A. of 1908).

On 25th July 1908 Ajit Singh, dressed as a fakir, travelled to Jullundur and thence by road to Hoshiarpur. In this connection the C.I.D., Punjab, noted that a declaration had appeared in the *Punjabee* on behalf of Ajit Singh, Sufi Amba Parsahad, Lal Chand Falak and Ishri Parshad, saying that they had assumed and would continue to wear the garb of Sadhus until Tilak's release. At Hoshiarpur Ajit Singh visited

Amar Nath, Brahman, and, leading on 29th July the party, consisting of Ajit Singh, Amba Parshad, Kedar Nath (para 2312 S.A. of 1908), Amar Nath and Lala Kawru Mal, travelled by stages to Kangra, which was reached on 31st July. An anonymous correspondent from Hoshiarpur wrote to say that the object of this tour was to poison the minds of men of the Native Army, who were then at home on leave in the hills, though the superintendent of Police remarked that this information could not be looked on as reliable and he gave it merely for what it was worth. The party travelled back via Gurdaspur and reached Lahore on 6th August.

On 6th September Lahore reported that Sufi Amba Parshad and Ajit Singh had started an agency for the sale of books, and the advertisement, which was issued in the name of Sowaran Singh, brother of Ajit Singh, contained a list of political books written by Amba Parshad, Ajit Singh and others. About the end of October Ajit Singh was again called up by Colonel Parsons and warned against writing seditious books.

On 1st November Ajit Singh left for Jhind State to attend the Gaurakshan meeting there, and it was stated he would go on from Jhind to Nagpur to attend a conference of the Extremist party. He was in Jullundur and neighbourhood on 4th, 5th and 6th November, during which time the officer commanding 10th Lancers at Jullundur heard through his Risaldar-Major that he was touring through villages and endeavouring to excite disaffection against British rule.

It also appears, though there is some confusion about dates, that Ajit Singh attended a meeting of Extremists held at Calcutta on 6th November 1908, but he did not take any active part in the proceedings. If this is correct, as is believed to be the case, the Risaldar-Major must have some mistake regarding the dates on which Ajit Singh was at Jullundur. A report from Kasur mentions his arrival in that place on 15th November 1908, and states that Ajit Singh, who had just returned from Calcutta, was accompanied by a Bengali named Narindra Nath, whom he had brought back with him.

Ajit Singh visited Dina Nath, retired Assistant Surgeon, at Lyallpur on 21st November. He was accompanied by

Amba Parshad, and on the 22nd notices regarding the Tilak Ashram were distributed and broadcast in the City. Ajit Singh's appeal setting forth the aims and objects of the Ashram is printed as Appendix No. 10. About this time another book by Ajit Singh entitled "Catching a finger leads to catching a hand" is mentioned as having been published. The book describes how the English gradually acquired possession of the country.

On 29th November Ajit Singh addressed a monster meeting which was convened in the Bradlaugh Hall and numbered some 5,000 people. Para 3485 S.A. of 1908 gives a detailed account of the proceedings, and is reproduced in full as Appendix No. 11.

On 9th January 1909 Lahore reported that Ajit Singh was having some pamphlets sold in the city by newspapers boys. The pamphlets were a sample copy of the *Swaraj*, a magazine recently started in London by Bipin Chandra Pal, a collection of the speeches of Tilak published in Poona, and a translation by Amba Parshad of one of Tilak's lectures (entitled "Rules for the New Party", apparently Tilak's Congress speech of 1906 in Calcutta). These Ajit Singh brought back with him from Delhi. Photographs of the recently deported Bengalis, and of Kishen Singh, brother of Ajit Singh, were also offered for sale, and efforts were made to obtain subscribers to the *Swaraj*.

About the end of January 1909 several additions to Ajit Singh's following were reported. These included Din Muhammad and Bishan Das (para 260 S.A. of 1909) Kahan Chand and Gobind Ram (para 402 Ibid) and Ram Dayal (para 470 Ibid).

About this period Ajit Singh's activity appears to have been chiefly devoted to the sale of the different seditious books published by himself, his brother Sowaran Singh and Sufi Amba Parshad. One Jai Nandan (para 401 of 1909), an employee of these men, attended the Gurukul meeting held at Hardwar early in March 1909, specially to see the publications alluded to.

Ajit Singh, with a party of three students, himself left for the Gurukul meeting on 3rd March, returning to Lahore on

the 15th idem. While at Hardwar he was reported by the United Provinces Police as having given trouble at Railway Stations owing to his having protested against the conveyance of pilgrims in cattle trucks and his having advised them not to travel in this way. He is further reported as having attempted to deliver a lecture in the waiting hall at Hardwar Station, but as having been prevented from doing so by the intervention of other Aryas.

About the middle of the March a rumour gained currency in different quarters that Government again intended to deport Ajit Singh, and Lahore reported a visit to the agitator by Ram Chand Peshawari (para 317 of 1909), Editor of the *Akash*, Delhi, who, it was said, would carry on the political propaganda in the event of the deportation of Ajit Singh.

Mention has already been made of different seditious books from the pen of Ajit Singh, and recently his activity in compiling and issuing similar publications has been unremitting. He and his brother Sowaran Singh and Sufi Amba Parshad are chiefly responsible for the steady stream of seditious literature which issues from the various presses in Lahore. The publications bear the name sometimes of one and sometimes of another of the collaborators, and, though it is difficult to assign with exactitude the share taken by each, the output of books compiled by their joint efforts has been enormous. It is obviously beyond the scope of a history sheet to give a complete list of such books or an indication of the nature of their contents, but the following are the better known of these publications:—

1. *European Tahzib ki Bezabtayian.*
2. *Inquilab.*
3. *Desi Fauj Zaffar Mauj.*
4. *Hindustan ko Angrezon ne kis tarah fateh kia, aur us par kis tarah se hukumat karte hain.*
5. *European tahzib ka namuna.*
6. *Ungali pakarate Pauncha pakra* (Catching a finger leads to catching a hand).
7. *Hindustan men Angrezon ki amad aur yahan kis tarah se hukumat hasil ki.*
8. *Hindustan men Angrezon ki hukumat.*
9. *Bandar Baut.*
10. *Divide and Conquer* (English).
11. *Ilhaq Punjab* or the annexation of the Punjab.

The majority of these books are compiled from, or are translations of different works impeaching British methods, more especially in the days of the East India Company, and their common object, to quote from an advertisement of "Divide and Conquer," is "To narrate the history of the wide field of un-Christian operations, and to lay open to the public the most extensive and extraordinary system of crime practised by the early Englishman in India that the world has ever witnessed." The sale and dissemination of these books pushed with the utmost diligence and assiduity, and the fact that they are guardedly written and, on the whole, fall just short of violating the provisions of the criminal law on the subject would seem to indicate that their undoubted object is to excite, as far as may be, short of committing an offence, hatred and disaffection against the Government; at the present time this mode of attacking and traducing Government is the most marked and the most dangerous phase of the activities of Ajit Singh and his fellow-agitators in the Punjab.

(completed up to 15th March 1909).

D. Petrie.

Assistant to Deputy Ins-General
of Police, Criminal Investigation Deptt., Punjab.

Lahore.

the 15th April 1909.

[Home Deptt, Pol. D, August 1909, No. 33, pp. 3-7.]

Appendix No. 7

Speeches of Ajit Singh delivered at Batala, Gurdaspur district, on the 27th and 28th April 1907:—

Ajit Singh stated the progress of a Nation depended on three things :—

1. Local Industries,
2. Agriculture, and
3. Trade.

In India, the English were destroying local industries, gave no help to the farmer and were ruining the trade. He proceeded to point out the state of affairs in the Chenab Colony; he referred to the remarks made by Mr. Douie, who

had stated that the action of Government was illegal and unjust. To justify their action Government had recently passed a law. In enhancing the taxation, he likened Government to the tailor who after making a coat for a constituent, demanded enhanced price because that coat exceeded the purchaser's expectations.

Government had unduly taxed cotton and sugar, he added.

He informed his hearers that the colonists in the "Bar" had resolved to take no more water from the canal and to refuse to pay further taxes. He urged them to refuse to pay further taxes. He urged them to refuse to pay their revenue. Government was powerless. Government could not send every one to jail. He implored them not to be afraid but to be ready and willing to go to prison for the sake of the country and its people. Quoting the case of the *Panjabee*, he urged them to become notorious as the Proprietor and Editor had gained notoriety by their fearlessness. He advised them to make their own committees and sub-committees and to settle their own disputes. Did the youths of 20 from England understand their affairs as they did? No, avoid the English courts. He urged all Government servants to resign their appointments and others to cease paying revenue like the colonists of Lyallpur had sworn to do. The oppression by the English was beyond endurance. He instanced the case of murder of Sergeant Karam Singh of the Delhi Police by an [English] soldier. The soldier was acquitted. What justice! He urged them to no longer submit to bad treatment by Englishmen. If they should be struck or beaten, they should strike back. The English people were powerless, the Government tyrannical and British rule in India would cease one day, whether to-day, to-morrow or 10 years hence.

On 28th April Ajit Singh continuing his discourse of the previous day, urged joint action against Government. He asserted that Government could do nothing. Government owed its position in the country to the Indian Army, not the British Army which was an army of cowards.

After comparing the relative numbers of English and Indians he urged the people to refuse to pay revenue and to die for their country. He said that God had sent plague to

teach the people the power they possess; it was better to perish fighting than to die to plague.

[Ibid, p. 8.]

Appendix No. 8.

Speech delivered by Ajit Singh at the Bharat Mata meeting, Lahore on the 1st May 1907:—

Ajit Singh first of all urged the necessity of the Hindus and Muhammadens making common cause against the British, and accused the Government of fostering the antagonism between the two races. He then drew parallels between events in the history of England, which led to the general freedom of the England (sic) people, and the events taking place in India at the present time. He commented upon the dishonesty of the British and said that they employed every means to incite and keep alight feelings of hatred against natives. He scoffed at the so-called favours shown to the Indian by the British. Referring to the remission of enhanced rates for water on the Bari Doab Canal, he said that Government pretended that the postponement was due to the zamindars having taken no part in the present agitation; on the contrary, the zamindars had refused to pay revenue and were prepared to rise against the Government and loot the treasuries. Referring to the Police, Ajit Singh stated that they were not opposed to members of the force; on the contrary he hoped that men who were now serving as Sub-Inspectors and Inspectors would become the Captains and Generals of their nation. In conclusion he urged his audience to be prepared for action.

[Ibid, pp. 8-9.]

Appendix No. 9.

Ajit Singh's speech at the Bradlaugh Hall on 9th March 1909:—

“GENTLEMEN,; It is a long time since I have had the opportunity of addressing a meeting of this sort, and in the same way as I feel happy at being once more amongst my fellow-countrymen, so I feel at the release of our friend Bipin Chandra Pal. It has been the custom in India since the days of old to commemorate the lives of our heroes by selecting one particular day to be observed as a festival. And it is only by this means that the memory and, the names of our heroes

who lived in the past have been kept alive to this day. [our greatest festival is that which is held in commemoration of the return from banishment of Ram Chandar. To-day Ram Chandar's son has returned to us, and we must celebrate and commemorate the day. (Note-Bipin Chandra Pal is the son of Ram Chandar)]. I will relate to you some of the incidents of the life of Bipin Chandra Pal. Bipin Chandra Pal was born in the year 1858. After completing his education he came to Calcutta, and there he used to attend the lectures of Keshab Chandar Sen and began to incline to the religion of the Brahmo Samaj. His father hearing of this became angry with him, but in spite of his father's opposition he stuck to his principles and became a member of the Samaj. His father then disinherited him, but he continued steadfast. In his early life Bipin Chandra Pal began to break the bonds of the caste system and adopted broader views and principles. He married the widowed niece of Babu Surendra Nath Banerji and thus encouraged widow remarriage. Being a man of principle and a strict observer of truth he has invariably succeeded. His father, who was at first angry with him and deprived him of his inheritance, forgave him on his death-bed and left him all his property. After the death of his father Bipin Chandra Pal became head-master of a school at Calcutta, but having a great love for his birth place, Sylhet, he moved there and opened a school. As will be seen, Bipin Chandra Pal from the very first applied himself to the amelioration of the condition of his nation. In the early days of the Congress, when Badr-ud-din Taibjee was President, he raised his voice against the passing of the Arms Act. This is what is called patriotism.

Every man has a desire to win a good name for himself and to this end strive his utmost even to death. BUT THE TRUE DESIRE is the desire to benefit the whole nation and one's motherland. The spirit of this desire is called patriotism (Example of true patriots are to be found in every nation and in every country. In the year 1857, in the days of the Mutiny when the Indian Army was besieging the British in the fort at Delhi, Lieutenant Willowby decided to explode the powder magazine himself rather than let it fall into the hands of the enemy, who might utilise the powder to destroy his fellow countrymen. This he did, and though some lives were sacrificed many others were saved. Mr. Willowby's name

lives to this day. This is one example of patriotism, to sacrifice one's own life for the sake of one's countrymen. I give you another. In the same year Feroze Shah, a prince of Delhi, marched with two hundred sepoy to Moradabad, where there was a magazine, belonging to the English, which was at the time guarded by the Nawab of Rampur, an ally of the English. Leaving his sepoy, Feroze Shah, seeing that if the magazine fell into the hands of the English they would use it to the utter destruction of the Indian Army, determined to enter the magazine alone and fire it, thus killing many of the white soldiers and destroying the powder, rather than let it be made use of by the English. This Feroze Shah did and thus saved the lives of many of his countrymen.

"I will show you other forms of patriotism. At the Paris Exhibition amongst other things there were some plantains. A native of India who had been living in Paris for some years saw the fruit and began to weep. It was the love of his country that brought tears to his eyes at the sight of the fruit, which was the product of his beloved country.

"The savage tribes of Africa extol the richness of their country and believe it to be better than by other country, and prefer to be buried in their own land.

Turning to the second subject before the meeting Ajit Singh said: "We should feel sorry at the untimely death of Gurdas Ram, Barrister-at-law. I was not sorry when I heard of his being imprisoned, for his was a noble cause. He was kept in jail for six months, not on a charge of theft or for debauchery or murder, but simply because he raised his voice on behalf of that community which gives you your collars and clothes, which feeds those who rule over us, and which fill the treasuries of the king, and the zamindars and because he strongly opposed the enhanced rate of water-tax. I did not know him personally. My only connection with him was that I delivered a lecture at Rawalpindi at a meeting at which he also was present and at which he spoke. I was kept an exile for six months from my country, while he was kept for six months in jail. When the pleaders were discharged at Rawalpindi by Mr. Martineau as innocent, a question was asked in Parliament, whether the pleaders should be awarded compensation for the troubles suffered by them in jail, but

Mr. Morley replied that this was unnecessary. Why? Because they were natives.

“I received a letter yesterday informing me that Saiyed Haidar Raza Khan of Delhi had been arrested and was being prosecuted on some charge. This letter was written by the second Editor of the newspaper *Aftab*. The news does not grieve me, but is a source of pleasure, for I believe that he is going to suffer martyrdom in the cause of patriotism, and for sticking to his principles ... Honour and respect are achieved by martyrdom. If Ram Chandarji had not been exiled he would not have gained the reputation that he now commands. This too is true of Bipin Chandra Pal, and Saiyed Haidar Raza will soon attain the honour of martyrdom.”

Ajit Singh then proposed that a telegram should be sent to the Calcutta newspapers expressing joy at the release of Bipin Chandra Pal, and that a letter should be sent to the relations of Gurdas Ram conveying an expression of sympathy.

The meeting dispersed at 1 P.M.

[Ibid, pp. 9-10].

Appendix No. 11

The National meeting at Lahore on 29th November 1908:—

A monster meeting attended by about 5,000 people was held at the Bradlaugh Hall, Lahore on the 29th of November at 2 P.M. The hall was packed, but responsible Indian publicists and politicians of the town were conspicuous by their absence. It had been announced that Ajit Singh would deliver a lecture on education, and thousands of Hindu and Sikh young men, with a sprinkling of Muhammadans and men of mature age, came to hear him.

Ajit Singh, who showed signs of recent illness and was dressed in the yellow garments of a Sanyasi which he and some of his friends have vowed to wear till Mr. Tilak's release, rose to speak at 2.30 P.M. and delivered a rambling discourse on the necessity of national education, diversified here and there with bursts of native eloquence and punctuated by applause. He asserted that the education imparted in

our Universities had been intended to denationalise the Indians, and the authorities had been to a large extent successful in attaining their object. Those educated in our schools and colleges had become Europeanised to such an extent that they knew nothing of the great and glorious past of this country, took little interest in its present officers and were careless for its future. They had become so false to their religion that they knew that English-made sugar was manufactured with the bones of the sacred cow, but showed not the slightest hesitation in using the Bideshi sugar. They had become so divorced from their past traditions that they were utterly lacking in respect for their elders, and imagined themselves the repositories of all wisdom. Now, however, some of the educated men had begun to show signs of repentance. They did not think it beneath them to mingle with their humble brethren and study the great past of their glorious land, and endeavour to better its condition. Government had consequently resolved to strike at the root of higher education. It had at first proposed to extend primary education to the masses, but, afraid lest it might infect the agriculturist with the vices of unrest and discontent, it had decided to shelve that also. Students were now prohibited from taking part in politics, while those of England were instructed in it. The expenditure on education incurred by the British Government of India as compared with that of other countries was miserably small, and the teachers extremely low-paid. The private schools and colleges too, followed the scheme of University education, and did little good to the country. But the powers that be looked askance at these institutions. He did not blame the authorities for these views. They naturally wanted to maintain their rule in India and must resort to any means to attain their end. But it was the duty of the sons of India to sink their differences and raise their motherland to its old position in the scale of nations. This country once possessed immense wealth; its agricultural products were more than sufficient to provide for the needs of its inhabitants, and its industries so flourishing that the products of its looms were exported to all parts of the world, even to distant Europe. Now, however, a blight had fallen on the land. It had become one of the poorest countries in the world, chronic famine prayed upon its vitals, and its ancient industries were dead or dying. It is, therefore, our bounden duty to improve this condition of affairs, the frowns of the authorities not-

withstanding. He and some of his friends had received from the district Magistrate warnings that they should not carry their intended publication of seditious books or pamphlets into execution. It seemed the authorities had now become so omniscient that they could divine the thoughts of others. But while they had received warnings from Government they were also receiving warnings from spreading the light. The interests of their country demanded that they must dissipate the prevailing ignorance and impart knowledge, and they would remain true to their country whatever the cost. Englishmen might, if they liked, construe this into sedition. Being the ruling race they could put any interpretation they liked upon his words.

(Here there was some disturbance in the crowd and the pale face of Ajit Singh became a shade more pale. But it transpired that some advertisement of pamphlet was being distributed). But it was their bounden duty to spread education. Let every man who knew any language take a vow to teach that language to at least one man so as to enable him to read newspapers and books, and the work of education would be carried on without any hitch or expense. It was knowledge that was wanted by the people of India, and knowledge must be propagated at all costs and with all sacrifices.

[Ibid, pp. 10-11.]

B—OFFICIAL PAPERS ON DEPORTATION OF LALA LAJPAT RAI AND S. AJIT SINGH IN MAY-JUNE-JULY 1907

PUNJAB

People's Protest on Deportation

Our agent at Lahore reports that Bhoda Raj Sahni, barrister-at-law, son of Hans Raj Sahni, pleader, now under arrest in Rawalpindi, has arrived in Lahore. He says that he is going to send a deputation to England and America and that the deputation will include Tilak and Surendra Nath Banerji. The Government is being abused in every street, but not loudly as before, and when people indulge in abuse they took round to

see that no one overhears them. Subscriptions are being collected for a fund called "The Revenge Fund"....A number of people, nearly all barristers or pleaders, have sworn to spare neither their property nor their wealth nor their life in bringing about the ruin of the *Feringhis*. Subscriptions are levied at the rate of two rupees a head from shopkeepers and others, the collectors being pleaders and the *Chowdhris* of the various bazars. It is said that the money will be spent in revenging the deportation of Lajpat Rai by furthering the agitation and creating disturbances. During the last few days many secret meetings have been held.

• On Monday a meeting, nominally religious, was held at Arya College. Political matters were not only discussed as part of the programme of the meeting but the opportunity was taken by those attending it to exchange their views on the present situation. Papers containing an account of the tyranny of the English, prepared by Dhanpat Rai, barrister and Bhagwan Das, pleader, have been sent through the Bharat Insurance company to Raiz-ud-din Ahmed, the Russian Agent, who is now at Bareilly. It is understood that these papers will be sent on to Russia. A history of Lajpat Rai, described as "the true friend of the motherland", is being prepared and will be distributed among the jats. It is said that two or three thousand copies of the leaflet addressed to the soldiers of the British Army in India have been printed by editor of the newspaper of Gujranwala and distributed among the sepoys in the Indian Army. With reference to this leaflet, an agent of ours, who is now in simla, tells me that a sikh commissioned officer, stationed, he believes, some where in the Central Provinces, travelled up to simla on saturday last and mentioned in the course of conversation that copies of this leaflet had been found under the pillows of sepoys in the Central Provinces.

[Home Deptt, pol. B, July 1907, No 39—117, progs 77, p. 77.]

Simla June 5th, 1907

The arrest of Ajit Singh [at Amritsar on the night of 2nd June] was known in Lahore on Sunday evening [when he arrived under escort] and caused much perturbation among

the agitators. Subscriptions for the "Revenge" and "Drill" funds have begun to pour in from Kaithal and Delhi.

[Ibid, Progs. No. 134, p. 153].

Simla June 10th, 1907

The special agent, whom we sent to Sialkot and the neighbourhood reports that on the morning of the 5th instant he noticed a well-dressed Hindu addressing a number of people at the railway station. He was telling them that the English were great cowards and one punjabi was equal to five Englishmen. Our agent got into the same compartment with him and there he stated that Lajpat Rai's case would be settled by Parliament tomorrow and Lajpat Rai would be allowed to return to Lahore.

The Superintendent of Police, Mandalay, recently asked Mr. Manackjee, Captain in the Upper Burma Volunteers and Incometax Collector, to visit Lal Lajpat Rai and to pump him regarding his influence with the troops. Mr. Manackjee, pretending to be a public Works Department officer, accordingly interviewed the Lala....The Lala...said that sepoys and others annoyed him very much by passing his bungalow and *salaaming* to him. He said it was all a farce, for one day they *salaamed* to the Madrassee boy. Lajpat Rai then said that he had no influence with the troops. That is the one thing they want, for if they have got the troops on their side Government must give way and grant their demands. If he had the same influence over the troops, as he has over others, things would be very different.

[Ibid, Progs. No. 144, P. 168].

Simla June 13th 1907.

The agent who was sent to Sialkot is now in Gujranwala. At Wazirabad he met some Jats at a sweetmeat shop. They were not altogether sober and were speaking freely about Ajit Singh, with whom they sympathised. They declared that the time had come for the end of the British rule. The English have no courage to fight with jats. Their brothers in the army will also rise against the British, and many sepoys on leave

had declared that if there had been the least sign of disturbances, it would have been seen how the English would have fared. No Sikh regiment or soldier would have fought against the people, but on the contrary would have attacked their British officers.

[Ibid, Progs No. 163, p. 190.]

Daily reportes on the state of political agitation in the Punjab, dated simla, the 5th July 1907:— .

Lyallpur reports that secret information has been received that a meeting was held at lyallpur at the house of Ram Chand, Vakil, on the 24th June, which was attended by a large number of Sikh zamindars. A resolution was proposed and passed in the meeting that every person present who had relations or connections in the army should write to them, encouraging them to cause every inconvenience to their European officers until Lajpat Rai was released. They should be advised to be insubordinate, to refuse to perform their duties, and to threaten to rising until this object was attained. By this means the British officers of the Native Army would be compelled to petition for the release of Lajpat Rai, in order to maintain discipline in their regiments.

[Home Deptt, Pol., proceeding No. 32, P. 35]

Baluchistan

Loralai. The police report that a large number of the Government Subordinates here are members of the Arya Samaj, and that most of them were present at a secret meeting convened to discuss means for effecting the release of Lajpat Rai and Ajit Singh. The feasiability of resorting to violent methods was considered.

The view of the Muhammadan postmaster of Murgha is that the Sikh soldiery regard Lajpat Rai and Ajit Singh as having been treated with unfair severity by the Government that they are consequently ill-disposed towards government and regard the present unrest as justifiable.

[Home, Deptt, Pol., Proceeding No. 34, P. 37.]

Amritsar

A Sadhu, by name Radha Swami, has latterly taken up a position on the steps of the Golden Temple tank and exhorts his listeners to unite and act together. He says it is much to be regretted that nothing has been done to secure the release of Lala Lajpat Rai and Sardar Ajit Singh who have been sent into exile for serving their country, and he fears that nothing will be done until Hindus and Muhammadans learn to unite. He invoked blessings on the few Englishmen who were bombarding Mr. Morley with questions on the subject in Parliament and urged the people to follow their example and agitate, adding that no man had come forward to take the places of those exiled. Had their places been filled up such action would not be necessary, but no substitutes being available they must endeavour to get them back in order that they may complete their work. This Sadhu, it is reported, will go to Lahore in the course of a few days.

[Home Deptt, Pol—B, proceeding No 68, July 1907, P. 83.]

Simla July 20th 1907

It is reported that reprints of the speeches of Ajit Singh are again being scattered freely among the native troops.

6. Rawalpindi—On the first of Sravan when the Hindu ladies attended the different temples and *dharmshalas* to take part in the religious ceremonies held on that day sermons and lectures were delivered to them inculcating national ideas and the women heard them are said to have taken an oath that they will give up all rejoicing, etc., until Lala Lajpat Rai and the Rawalpindi undertrial prisoners have been released.

8. Amritsar.—In the course of conversation at Kasil, Sundar Singh, sepoy of the 30th Punjab Infantry, stationed, at Jhelum, who is now on leave, said that most of the information calculated to create ill-will against Government such as that they had unjustly increased the water-rate and had unjustly deported Lala Lajpat Rai merely because he was a well-wisher of the agricultural classes, was disseminated by the native commissioned officers. He said that in Jhelum about Rs. 15,000, was collected for Lajpat Rai's "Revenge Fund" and sent to Lahore.

[Ibid, Proceeding No. 70, P. 86.]

Simla June 17th, 1907

Punjab

The *pujaris* of the Golden Temple in Amritsar are reported to have been won over by the disloyal faction, and they too are preaching disaffection to the Sikhs who visit the temple: and it is said to be merely for the sake of outward appearances that Sir Phiroz Shah [Mehta] and Mr. Gokhale have been selected to go up to Simla and present a memorial to the Viceroy praying for the release of Lajpat Rai.

[Prog. No. 163. p. 190].

Simla June 20th, 1907

Daily Report of the Director of Criminal Intelligence.

Punjab

It is reported from Jhang that a clerk in the district office, who is a member of the Arya Samaj, has been collecting subscriptions at the rate of four annas a head for the cause of Lajpat Rai.

At Lyallpur on 9th June a meeting was held in the Arya Samaj Hall to sympathise with Lajpat Rai and to disavow the existence of any sincerity in the apology tendered at the meeting of the previous day when regret had been expressed for the tone of former utterances in which loyalty to Government was expressed.

It is reported from Rawalpindi that Lala Desraj Singh, son of Lala Hansraj Sahni, and Bakshi Saheb have in compliance with the request of Hazara Singh, pleader, gone to attend a secret meeting at Sialkot.

Daily Report on the state of political agitation in the Punjab, dated the 20th June 1907.

Kangra reports that a secret meeting was held on the 13th June at the house of Raja Ram, a school clerk in the district office, at which a number of Hindus were present. A Sikh, whose name and description are not given, lectured. He

stated that the English could not have deported Lajpat Rai and Ajit Singh if the Hindus as a body were united.

[Prog. No. 167, p. 195].

Simla July 6th 1907.

Punjab

Lahore—On the return of Arya Samaj deputation which waited on the Lieutenant-Governor of the Punjab, Bhagat Ishwar Dass, Lala Hansraj, Principal of the D.A.V. College, Mr. Roshan Lal, barrister, and Mr. Ganpat Rai, barrister, were sounded with respect to the present state of the agitation. It is reported that they have advised all the Indian agitators to hold their hands until the result of the efforts now being made by their Indian friends in England to secure the release of Lajpat Rai is ascertained. While these negotiations are in progress they have decided to act with the cunningness and treachery which they have learned from the English, and if they prove unsuccessful in securing Lajpat Rai's liberation, then all the Indian agitators are at liberty to "cut with the tooth that knot which cannot be united with the nail." They said that the English were acting foolishly in depending on their military strength, because the majority of the soldiers are their own brethren who would refuse to fire on them and the English would be "wiped out" the very day that they fired on and killed a sedre (sic) of an Indian. After more tall talk of this nature they explained that if the final orders of the Government of India were to the effect that Lajpat Rai would not be liberated the ordinance would be openly defied and big meetings would be held at Lahore and all important centres in India to express sympathy with him. The British will, it is anticipated, use the army to suppress these meetings and then a general conflagration throughout India will ensue. Without treating these views too seriously they indicate the necessity for warning local Governments to be on the alert when the time comes for the Government to pass their orders. The agitators seem to be convinced that their ideas are shared by some Muhammadans and the latter will join them against Government when the time comes, and our agent considers that they have grounds for their opinion. Brother of Lajpat Rai, Ranpat Rai, however, said that their agents are doing their work steadily in native regiments and that un-

less Government arrest all the Hindus, the cause must advance.

Extract from a letter from Mr. G.K. Gokhale to private-Secretary to the Viceroy dated the 10th June 1907.

I am getting up now an influentially signed memorial to the Viceroy about him (Lajpat Rai) and I will come personally to Simla with the memorial about the end of July. The memorial will be signed by all non-official members and ex-members of Viceregal and Provincial Councils, by all ex-members of the Congress and Ex-Chairman of Provincial Conferences. To bracket Ajit Singh with Lajpat Rai is monstrous in justice to the latter. When I was in Lahore in February last, Ajit Singh had already begun to denounce Lajpat Rai as a coward and a pro-government man, because Lajpat Rai would have nothing to do with Ajit Singh's propaganda. However, I will not trouble you with these things in a letter. Only I trust that when I come to Simla you will enable me to lay them before His Excellency, and if you are satisfied that a grave injustice has been done to Lajpat Rai, you will use your influence to have the wrong immediately righted.

Information

C.C.S. , 8.6. 07.

There are the strongest reasons to believe that Lajpat Rai was closely in touch with Ajit Singh's political propaganda after February when Ajit Singh is alleged by Mr. Gokhale to have denounced him. They both attended and spoke at the mass meeting held at Lyallpur on 21st and 22nd March when Lajpat Rai made an inflammatory speech. On the 7th April, Ajit Singh spoke at the meeting in Lahore which was one of the most dangerous and seditious held and at which thumb impressions were taken on an agreement not to pay the enhanced canal rates. A private meeting was held on the previous evening in the house of Lajpat Rai at which the subjects to be discussed on following day were considered and the proposal to make the villagers attest the printed agreement not to pay the canal rates is said to have emanated from Lajpat Rai himself.

On the Occasion of the first annual meeting of the "Hamdardan Hind" society, Batala, Gurdaspur, Lajpat Rai was advertised to attend a lecture. Ajit Singh was there and as Lajpat Rai did not come, he took his place.

My Lahore agent says that Ajit Singh received Rs. 100 a month from Lajpat Rai. Lajpat Rai gave him notes for his speeches and paid his expenses out of the political fund which was placed at his disposal. During the time of the Bharatmata meetings Ajit Singh used to visit Lajpat Rai almost every night, generally accompanied by Nand Kishore, Secretary of the Bharatmata. Ajit Singh went to him to report the proceedings of the day and to take his orders. Lajpat Rai was heard to praise Ajit Singh for his intrepid speeches. Just before Lajpat Rai's arrest Ajit Singh took frequent counsel with him in private.

The implication that Lajpat Rai dissociated himself in any sense from Ajit Singh's extreme propaganda will not stand the least examination.

V.J. Stevenson Moore. 18,7,07

[Home (Pol.) Dept., Aug, 1907, No. 3, p. 3].

C—Revolutionary Leaflet,

[A revolutionary leaflet called *A message to the Punjabis* was in circulation in Delhi and elsewhere in the Punjab; it is apparently based upon the Tanjore leaflet, and suggests that the Zakka Khel expedition should be the signal for a general rising. The following is an extract from the leaflet:]

It is monstrous that three hundred millions of people are downtrodden as slaves by a few thousand of white devils. The time has come, the signal for action has fallen, and ye young men of the sacred land of five waters, you are to deliver the judgment. What is the fear? Be brave! March on forward. They say that you have no union. What do you care for that lifeless union? In your university you have got 20 lakhs of young men. Let one lakh come forward; the nation is

free. How many John Bulls you have got in a district? Let 200 young men organise a secret band in each district. Let them rise in a preconcerted moment, chop the heads off the English rogue, blow up railway bridges by dynamite and cut down telegraph wires; Government would be paralysed in no time. They say that you have no arms. But are they the monopoly of any nation? Give money and any nation would sell them to you. They say you are poor, but have you not got enough of money in Treasuries, Banks and Post Offices? Young men, come forward with undaunted courage and unflagging zeal. Don't you study the signs of the times? God has given you the first opportunity to display your revolutionary genius and activities. The Zakka Khel expedition is going on. Blow up a few railway bridges, and make the further supply of arms and ammunitions an impossibility. Let them rot to death there, isolated from the main stock of their strength. Their weakness is your strength, their loss is your gain, their destruction is your construction.

Let the expedition be an index of a great revolution and insurrection in India. This is the message. Fulfil it and show your worth. The whole of India is ready. Your action will be the signal. Do not fail or falter.

Bande Matram

[Home, Dept, Pol. Branch, Proceedings No. 42, P.4].

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